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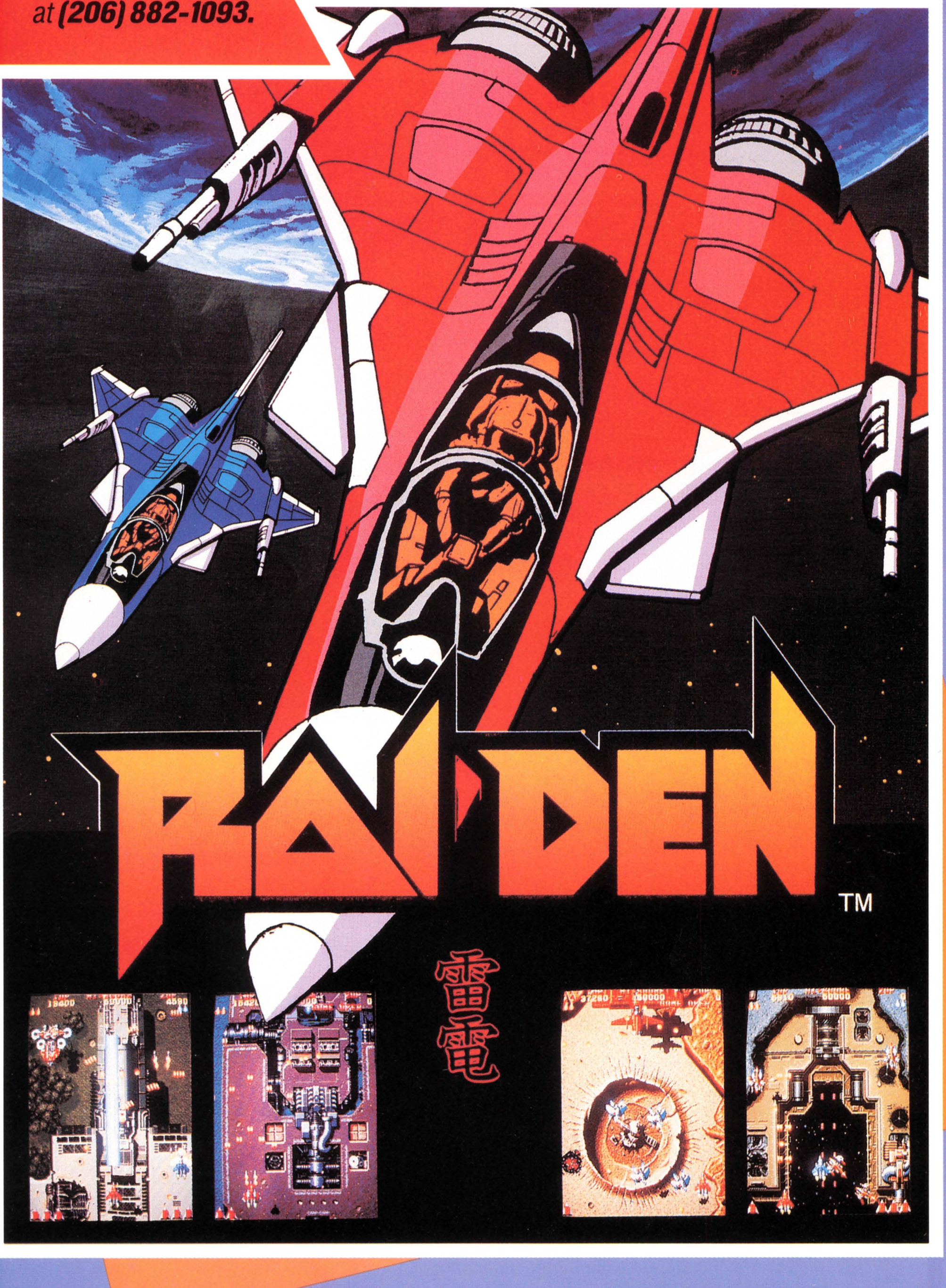

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EQUIPMENT POLL BALLOT

Please rate the games on a scale of 1-10, with 10 for superior earnings. Space is allowed for write-in entries. Games available first as dedicated, then as kit, appear under kits.

VIDEO DEDICATED:

____ AfterBurner (Sega)
____ Alien Storm (Sega)
____ Battle Shark (Taito)
____ Beast Busters (SNK)
____ Big Run (Jaleco)
____ Chase H.Q. (Taito)
____ Crime Fighters (Konami)
____ Cyberball (Atari)
____ Final Lap (Atari)
____ Four Trax (Atari)
____ Galaxy Force (Sega)
____ G-LOC (Sega)
____ Hard Drivin' (Atari)
____ Line of Fire (Sega)
____ Mechanized Attack (SNK)
____ Mercs (Capcom)
____ NARC (Williams)
____ Operation Thunderbolt (Taito)
____ Operation Wolf (Taito)
____ OutRun (Sega)
____ Quarterback (Leland)
____ Robo Cop (Data East)
____ S.C.I. (Taito)
____ Search & Rescue (SNK)
____ Slick Shot (Grand Products)
____ Smash TV (Williams)
____ S.T.U.N. Runner (Atari)
____ Super Hang On (Sega)
____ Super Monaco GP (Sega)
____ Super Off Road (Leland)
____ Team Quarterback (Leland)
____ TMNT (Konami)
____ W.G.P. (Taito)

OTHER VIDEO DEDICATED:

____ ______________________________ (______________________)

VIDEO KITS:

____ Air Duel (Irem)
____ Air Buster (Sharp Image)
____ Aliens (Konami)
____ All American Football (Leland)
____ Ameri Darts (Ameri Corp.)
____ AquaJack (Romstar)
____ Arch Rivals (Bally/Midway)
____ Astayanax (Jaleco)
____ Badlands (Atari)
____ Ballarena (Chevalier)
____ Baseball Stars (SNK)
____ Block Out (American Technos)
____ Bloxeed (Sega)
____ Buster Bros. (Capcom)
____ Bottom of the 9th (Konami)
____ Cabal (Fabtek)
____ Cadash (Taito)
____ Cal. 50 (Romstar)
____ Capcom Bowling (Capcom)
____ Championship Sprint (Atari)
____ Columns (Sega)
____ Combatribes (American Technos)
____ Crime City (Taito)
____ Cyberball 2072 (Atari)
____ D J Boy (American Sammy)
____ Dragon Breed (Irem)
____ Dynamite Duke (Fabtek)
____ E.S.W.A.T. (Sega)
____ Final Blow (Romstar)
____ Final Fight (Capcom)
____ Fire Shark (Romstar)
____ Gang Wars (SNK)
____ Golden Axe (Sega)
____ Golden Tee Golf (Strata)
____ Hydra (Atari)
____ Klax (Atari)
____ Lightning Fighter (Konami)
____ Magician Lord (SNK)
____ Meta Fox (I-VICS)
____ Midnight Resistance (Data East)
____ M.V.P. (Sega)
____ NAM-1975 (SNK)
____ Nastar Warrior (Taito)
____ Ninja Gaiden (Tecmo)
____ Omega Fighter (American Sammy)
____ Pound for Pound (Irem)
____ Rai Den (Fabtek)
____ Rambo III (Romstar)
____ R-Type II (Irem)
____ Road Blaster (Atari)
____ Shadow Dancer (Sega)
____ Shinobi (Sega)
____ Skull & Crossbones (Atari)
____ Snow Bros. (Romstar)
____ Sports Match (Fabtek)
____ Street Smart (SNK)
____ Strider (Capcom)
____ Super Mario 3 (Nintendo)
____ Super Pool I (I-Vics)
____ Tecmo World Cup '90 (Tecmo)
____ Tetris (Atari)
____ Thunderjaw (Atari)
____ Toki (Fabtek)
____ Top Player's Golf (SNK)
____ Turbo OutRun (Sega)
____ Track-Pak (Leland)
____ Tri-Sports (Bally/Midway)
____ Two Crude (Data East)
____ U.N. Squadron (Capcom)
____ U.S. Classic (Taito)
____ Vapor Trail (Data East)
____ Violence Fight (Taito)
____ Volleyball (Data East)
____ Wheel of Fortune (GameTek)
____ Willow (Capcom)
____ WWF Super Stars (Amer. Technos)

OTHER VIDEO KITS:

____ ______________________________ (______________________)

PINBALL:

____ Bad Cats (Bally/Midway)
____ Bally Game Show (Bally/Midway)
____ Banzai Run (Williams)
____ Black Knight 2000 (Williams)
____ Bone Busters (Premier)
____ Cyclone (Williams)

____ Earthshaker (Williams)
____ Elvira (Bally/Midway)
____ High Speed (Williams)
____ Jokerz! (Williams)
____ Lights-Camera-Action! (Premier)
____ Mon. Night Football (Data East)
____ Mousin' Around (Bally/Midway)
____ Phantom of the Opera (Data East)
____ Pinbot (Williams)
____ Police Force (Williams)
____ Pool Sharks (Bally/Midway)
____ Robo Cop (Data East)
____ Rollergames (Williams)
____ Silver Slugger (Premier)
____ Taxi (Williams)
____ Whirlwind (Williams)

OTHER PINBALL:

____ ______________________________ (______________)

REDEMPTION

CRANES: (All types: single, double, triple, jumbo)

Rating	Game	Manufacturer	Rating	Game	Manufacturer

ROTARIES:

NOVELTY: (Examples: Skee-Ball, Boom Ball, Roll Down, Whac-A-Mole, etc.)

JUNIOR BASKETBALL:

STANDARD SIZE BASKETBALL:

MONEY PUSHERS: (Single player and multi-player units)

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NEWS BULLETIN

- **MARK YOUR CALENDARS...** The Amusement and Music Operators of Tennessee (AMOT) has announced a change in the dates of its show. Originally scheduled August 16-18, it will now be held the previous weekend, August 10-11. This will coincide with the National Conference of Legislators, which will be held at the beginning of the week, also in Nashville. The association is planning a game room for the legislative attendees as well as a tournament for legislators and their families similar to that held at the Washington Conference in the nation's capitol. In addition, the association will sponsor three booths at the Legislative Conference, which will feature Montana/South Dakota-approved video poker machines. For more information, contact Jan Green at (901) 521-1234 or (601) 371-1000.

- **GET YOUR BOWLINGO HERE...** David Snook, who wrote the article on *Bowlingo* in this issue, faxed us some last minute changes in the story. He told us that U. S. Bowlingo sales will be through Capcom USA. Jeff Walker of Geoffco will stay with Capcom to head up the *Bowlingo* sales.

- **MOVIN' ON UP...** Sun Corp. of America has moved to 11165 Knott Ave., Suites A&B, Cypress, CA 90630. The new phone number is (714) 891-4500; the FAX number is (714) 892-0150.

  Pioneer Laser Entertainment has also moved its offices. The new address is 2265 East 220th St., Long Beach, CA 90810. The new phone number is (213) 746-6337. The general correspondence FAX number is (213) 816-5111 and the sales order FAX number is (213) 816-5100.

- **THRILLED...** Sega has been teasing the industry for a while about a new dedicated game with an interesting twist. The game, *Moonwalker* was designed by none other than Michael Jackson, who made the moonwalk dance step famous. According to Sega, the game has been showing strong collections on test. The company will be shipping the game to distributors shortly.

- **BELIEVE IT OR NOT...** Sometimes I wonder if some town officials don't get a little carried away with their jobs. See if you can top this for absurdity: Diane Hausman of the Montauk Chamber of Commerce pointed out that there were 17—yes, count them—17 vending machines in East Hampton Town, New York, which are brightly lit at night. She felt that something should be done about it. The Amagansett Citizens Advisory Group also expressed disdain over the lit machines, claiming the town looked like an airport runway at night.

  Opposition came from one clear-thinking supervisor, Tony Bullock, who said, "I think people are getting a little over sensitive. I can't believe this board has nothing better to do than worry about whether a Coke machine has a light in it." So if you happen to be planning your vacation in East Hampton Town, make sure there are enough Coke and Pepsi machines lit up to guide your flight safely into town. Once you get there, you're on your own!

- **ADS ON PINBALLS...** Williams and Midway pinball machines will peddle consumer products. The messages will be delivered through graphics and electronically synthesized speech and music. The first advertisers signed up for the program include Pepsi, Thermos, Game Pro Magazine, and Share Data, a computer software company. Roger Sharpe, marketing director for the two companies said, "There are an estimated one million pinball machines and 100 million players in the world. The possibilities are unlimited."

- **BILL PASSES HOUSE...** In State Update (see page 20) we reported that a video poker bill in Louisiana had gone to the House floor for a full vote. On June 20th the House approved the bill 65-26 to legalize video poker machines. The bill, by Rep. Peppi Bruneau, includes strict penalties for operators who do not get permits for the machines or who try to rig the card games. The bill would also limit the number of machines in each location to five. Machine owners would have to pay a $1,000 per machine state license fee and local governments could levy a tax per machine up to $50. The bill will now pass to a Senate committee and if it gets out of that committee it will go to the Senate for a full vote. From there it will go to the governor's desk where he can sign it, veto it, or let it sit. If he lets it sit for two weeks it will automatically become law. Louisiana is one of several states hoping to have legislation passed to legalize video poker machines.

  David Goudeau, vice president of the Louisiana Amusement and Music Operators Association (LAMOA), said, "We have been fighting for this four years. The first year we were laughed out of committee. But we didn't give up. We've been back every year, and this time they took us seriously. We have accumulated trust with our grass roots effort. Educating our legislators and plain hard work got this passed."

- **STAN & SHARON HARRIS ON MTV...** Sharon Harris and Stan Harris of Stan Harris & Co. of Philadelphia were featured on an MTV News segment aired Thursday, June 14, which focused on the pleasures of pinball. (See News, page 16).

  Some quotes from the segment: "There's nothing that's been the same price for over 20 years." "In the early '80s pinball took a back seat to video, then when video declined, pinball started making a comeback." "It might be replaced temporarily...but ultimately pinball continues to go on and the others fade into the sunset." "Pinball involves skill and is constantly challenging."

  Appropriately, Sharon has been selected to head the International Flipper Pinball Association (IFPA).

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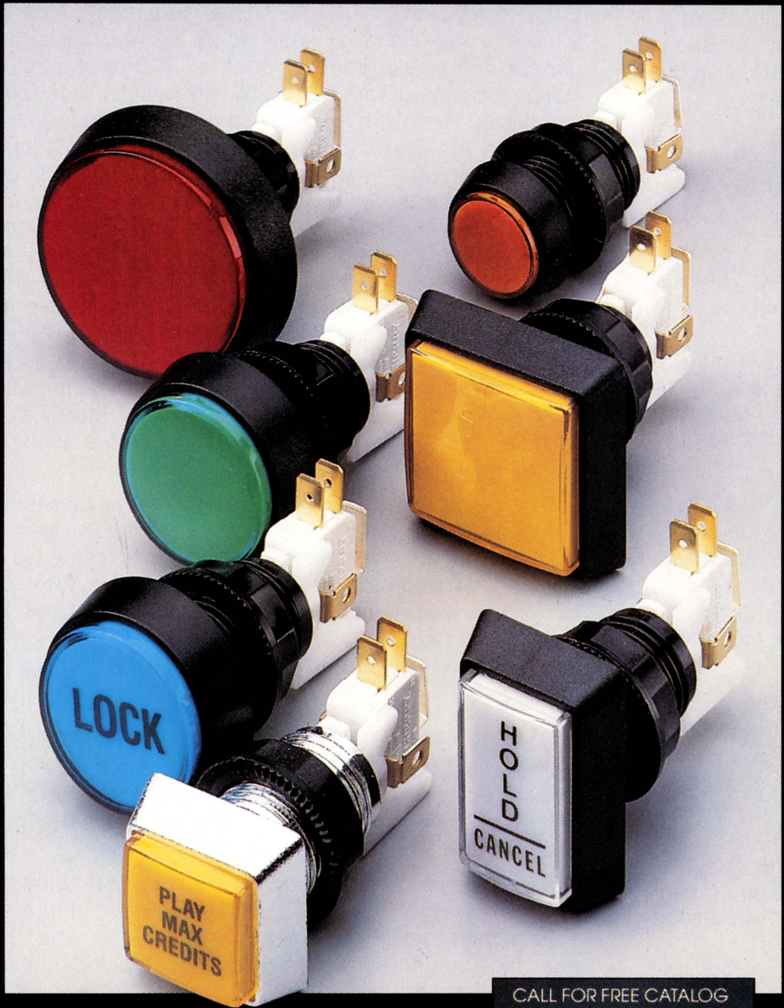

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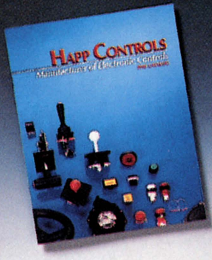

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FOUNDER
Ralph C. Lally II

PUBLISHER
Carol P. Lally

EDITOR
Valerie Cognevich

MANAGING EDITOR
Bonnie Theard

NEWS EDITOR
Christopher Caire

ART DIRECTOR
Jane Z. Nisbet

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Mary Henderson

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Irving Blackman
Charles Ross
Frank Seninsky

TECHNICAL WRITERS
Randy Fromm
Mark Gavett

EUROPEAN CORRESPONDENT
David Snook

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Rene'e C. Pierson

DIRECTOR OF ADVERTISING
Ron Kogos

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING
Carol Lea LeBell

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Renée C. Pierson

EDITORIAL OFFICES
6600 Fleur de Lis
New Orleans, LA 70124
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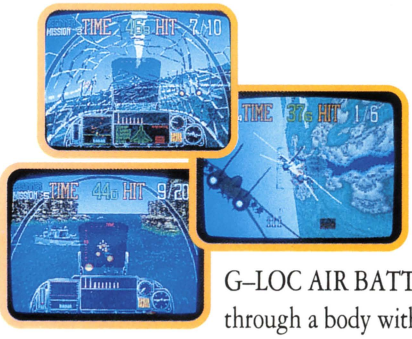
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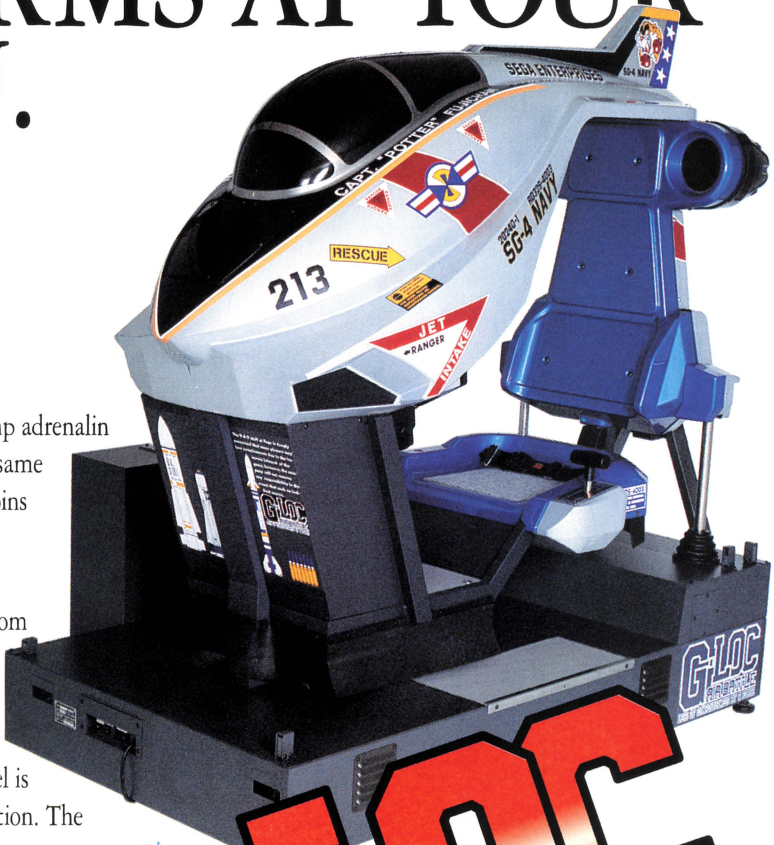
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213
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INTAKE
G-LOC AIR BATTLE

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Only Sega can build a video simulator game that performs as well at your location as it does on your bottom line. G–LOC delivers the pulse pounding excitement your customers will keep coming back for.

G–LOC offers players 38 stages within three different player–selectable skill levels. The beginner level is a challenging 9–stage training course with plenty of action. The intermediate level introduces the use of the throttle and afterburner and sends players into 13 stages of faster paced aerial combat. The third level lets "Aces" engage in 16 stages of fierce, high–speed dogfights.

G–LOC Air Battle is available in upright, cockpit, and deluxe (moving cabinet) configurations. Each features realistic flight stick, throttle (with afterburner button), guided missile launcher, machine gun trigger,and continous play. Air sickness bags are not included.

G-LOC AIR BATTLE

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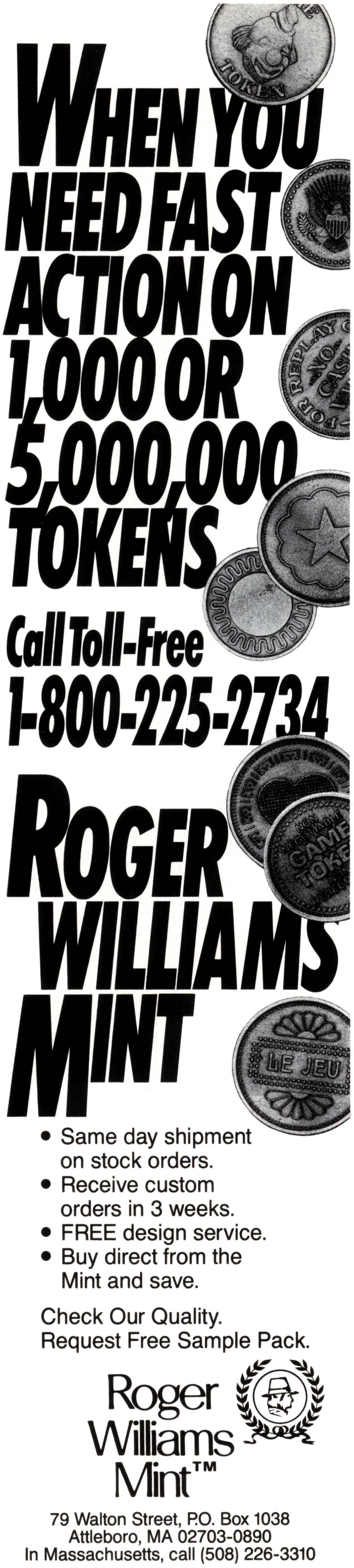

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Volume 16, No. 8 July 1990

FEATURES

Mexico Show 36

The expanding coin-op market in Mexico accounts for two industry trade shows this summer. The first, sponsored by the Federacion De Operadores, Ensambladores, Fabricantes De Maquinas De Video En La Republica Mexicana, A.C. gave American attendees insight into a unique amusement game market.

Coinman: Rich Babich 52

The focus stays on distributors this month. One result: an honest discussion with Rich Babich, a self-made man and head of the Colorado Game Exchange. Sample quote: "Frankly, if I would have realized how hard it is to run a first-class distributorship I never would have done it!"

Distributor Section 60

What does your distributor really think? What problems does he face daily? Straight answers are forthcoming in our special section of three in-depth articles: "What's it like being the man in the middle?," "Ask the Industry," and "Near new game market valued by distributors."

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COVER

Nintendo's Play Choice System offers more variety than ever before, from the lovable Mario to the hot Turtles. Look for these new titles on the horizon: *Dr. Mario, Ninja Gaiden II,* and *Captain Skyhawk.*

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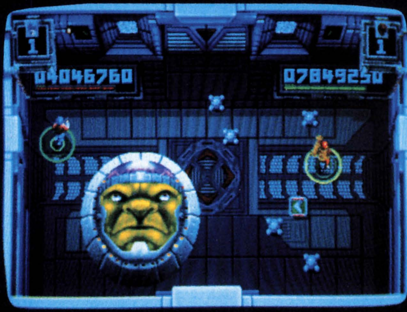
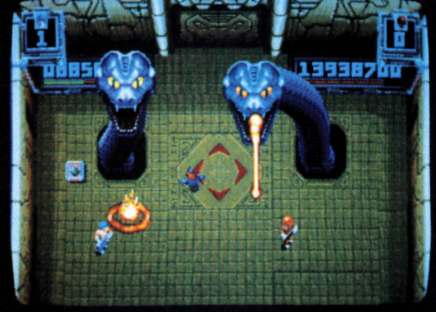
PLAY FOR KEEPS WITH A SMASH HIT!

The year is 1999. The setting is a futuristic game show that is dominating the ratings where contestants compete not just for cash and prizes—but also for their survival—before a live studio audience! Each contestant is armed with an arsenal of high-tech weapons and power-up devices ranging from grenades and lasers to smart bombs and force fields. Their challenge is to enter enclosed arenas to do battle with legions of drones, mutants and, ultimately, the most powerful boss monsters known to man, ***including Mutoid Man and Scarface.***

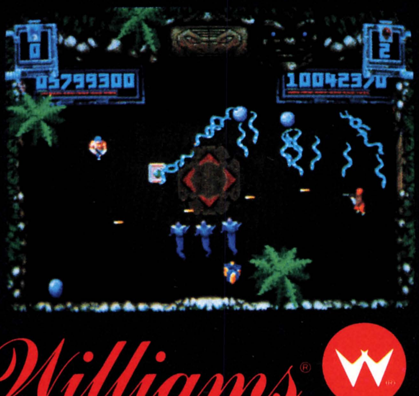


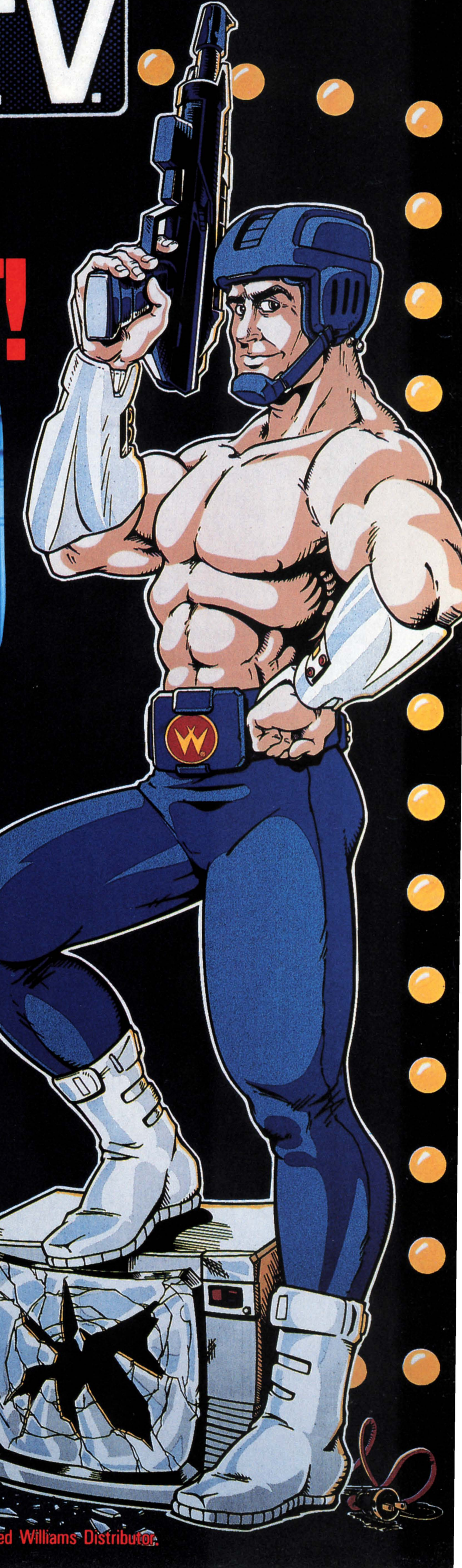


Only **SMASH TV** delivers such a sensational storyline and the type of innovative technology today's players are looking for. In fact, **SMASH TV** has more of everything! There's more enemies on-screen at a single time, more firepower, a full 32-bit hardware system, greater sound fidelity, more speech than ever before in a video game and built-in averaging for more customized levels of play and improved, long-term earnings strength. Diagnostically, **SMASH TV** is a cut above with in-depth, easy-to-utilize bookkeeping functions and more operator adjustable settings than ever before, including violence controls depending upon location needs.

SMASH TV . . . the new smash hit from the wizards of Williams.

SMASH TV is available in a 25″ monitor.





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EQUIPMENT POLL

Buying the right game is a "make-or-break" proposition for the operator, who must have both monthly and ongoing analyses of game performance. This chart is designed to give the operator information he needs to guide his purchases. The "longevity indicator" will tell him how long the game has remained high on the chart. The number of months on the Top 10 is important, as is the total number of months on the chart. Future months will include how long the game was in coin-op before being released for the home market. Look to the chart each month for additional polling information.

VIDEO & PINBALL COMBINED

GAME	MFG.	POINT VALUE	MONTHS ON CHART	MONTHS IN TOP 10	LONGEVITY POINTS
1. TMNT	Konami	9.15	7	7	348
2. Smash TV	Williams	9.05	2	1	54
3. G-LOC	Sega	9.00	1	1	48
4. Final Fight	Capcom	8.98	5	5	245
5. Fire Shark	Romster	8.79	1	1	46
6. Whirlwind	Williams	8.57	5	5	234
7. Four Trax	Atari	8.50	5	5	206
8. Hard Drivin'	Atari	8.49	15	15	721
9. Phantom of the Opera	Data East	8.29	3	3	110
10. Earthshaker	Williams	7.95	15	15	673
11. Mercs	Capcom	7.95	2	2	86
12. M.V.P.	Sega	7.93	2	2	64
13. Turbo Out Run	Sega	7.91	14	13	509
14. Rollergames	Williams	7.83	1	1	37
15. Aliens	Konami	7.81	3	2	92
16. Elvira/Party Monsters	Bally/Midway	7.75	8	8	325
17. WWF Super Stars	American Technos	7.70	12	11	495
18. Final Lap	Atari	7.68	14	13	504
19. Cyclone	Williams	7.60	15	15	566
20. Pool Sharks	Bally/Midway	7.60	2	2	67
21. Police Force	Williams	7.45	9	9	375
22. Cadash	Taito	7.45	2	1	32
23. Out Run	Sega	7.43	15	12	477
24. Track-Pak	Leland	7.42	2	2	54
25. Bally Game Show	Bally/Midway	7.25	4	2	85
26. Super Off Road	Leland	7.24	15	15	657
27. Beast Busters	SNK	7.20	5	4	142
28. Golden Axe	Sega	7.18	12	12	472
29. Bad Cats	Williams	7.05	6	5	153
30. Monday Night Football	Data East	7.00	9	7	272
31. Baseball Stars	SNK	7.00	1	1	20
32. Jokerz!	Williams	6.87	14	12	433
33. Toki	Fabtek	6.83	7	5	195
34. Taxi	Williams	6.80	15	12	434
35. Team Quarterback	Leland	6.79	15	6	343
36. Golden Tee Golf	Strata	6.79	2	0	21
37. Mousin' Around	Bally/Midway	6.76	6	3	104
38. Silver Slugger	Premier	6.73	3	1	62
38. Arch Rivals	Bally/Midway	6.72	12	8	358
40. Operation Thunderbolt	Taito	6.71	15	13	524
41. All American Football	Leland	6.69	8	7	255
42. Cyberball 2072	Atari	6.67	9	6	270
43. Chase H.Q.	Taito	6.63	15	9	399
44. Shadow Dancer	Sega	6.60	2	0	19
45. Violent Fight	Taito	6.60	1	0	6
46. RoadBlasters	Atari	6.53	11	8	160
47. High Speed	Williams	6.52	10	7	209
48. Tetris	Atari	6.51	11	6	183
49. AfterBurner	Sega	6.46	13	1	205
50. U. N. Squadron	Capcom	6.45	5	1	72

VIDEO KITS

GAME	MFG.	POINT VALUE	GAME	MFG.	POINT VALUE
1. Final Fight	Capcom	8.98	14. All American Football	Leland	6.69
2. Fire Shark	Romstar	8.79	15. Cyberball 2072	Atari	6.67
3. M.V.P.	Sega	7.93	16. Shadow Dancer	Sega	6.60
4. Turbo Out Run	Sega	7.91	17. Violent Fight	Taito	6.60
5. Aliens	Konami	7.81	18. RoadBlasters	Atari	6.53
6. WWF Super Stars	American Technos	7.70	19. Tetris	Atari	6.51
7. Cadash	Taito	7.45	20. U. N. Squadron	Capcom	6.45
8. Track-Pak	Leland	7.42	21. Cal. 50	Romstar	6.44
9. Golden Axe	Sega	7.18	22. Vapor Trail	Data East	6.40
10. Baseball Stars	SNK	7.00	23. Two Crude	Data East	6.29
11. Toki	Fabtek	6.83	24. Capcom Bowling	Capcom	6.28
12. Golden Tee Golf	Strata	6.79	25. Buster Bros.	Capcom	6.26
13. Arch Rivals	Bally/Midway	6.72			

VIDEO DEDICATED

GAME	MFG.	POINT VALUE	GAME	MFG.	POINT VALUE
1. TMNT	Konami	9.15	6. Mercs	Capcom	7.95
2. Smash TV	Williams	9.05	7. Final Lap	Atari	7.68
3. G-LOC	Sega	9.00	8. Out Run	Sega	7.40
4. Four Trax	Atari	8.50	9. Super Off Road	Leland	7.24
5. Hard Drivin'	Atari	8.49	10. Beast Busters	SNK	7.20

PINBALLS

GAME	MFG.	POINT VALUE	GAME	MFG.	POINT VALUE
1. Whirlwind	Williams	8.57	9. Bally Game Show	Bally/Midway	7.25
2. Phantom of the Opera	Data East	8.29	10. Bad Cats	Williams	7.05
3. Earthshaker	Williams	7.95	11. Monday Night Football	Data East	7.00
4. Rollergames	Williams	7.83	12. Jokerz!	Williams	6.87
5. Elvira/Party Monsters	Bally/Midway	7.75	13. Taxi	Williams	6.80
6. Cyclone	Williams	7.60	14. Mousin' Around	Bally/Midway	6.76
7. Pool Sharks	Bally/Midway	7.60	15. Silver Slugger	Premier	6.73
8. Police Force	Williams	7.45			

REDEMPTION

CRANES			NOVELTY			STANDARD BASKETBALL		
1. Big Choice	Betson	8.20	1. Pop-A-Ball	SMS	9.60	1. Hoop Shot	Doyle	8.00
2. Triple Crane	Betson	6.00	2. Skee-Ball	Skee-Ball	8.88	2. Shoot To Win	Smart	8.00

FROM THE EDITOR

I'm cheering for the rope!

Remember being involved in various activities at school? One of my favorite sports events was the tug-of-war. I recall one particular tug-of-war that pitted the cheerleaders and drill team against the football team.

It seemed an unfair contest, since we were rather weak compared to the bruisers on the football team. Being girls, I think we expected them to feel pity and give us a break. However, as each side tried to pull the other toward the inevitable "mud hole" in the middle, it wasn't long before we figured out that those guys meant business. The heck with the fact that we were girls or that it would be a cold day in you-know-where before we dated them again if they actually pulled us into that mud. These guys had full intentions of seeing us splattered into that murky hole.

Once we realized that we could not depend on them to go easy, we got tough. Chipping a nail or smudging our lipstick were minor consequences when we thought of the stakes. I can still feel the blisters I developed from pulling for all I was worth!

While the spectators chose their favorite side, no one thought much about the rope. *The rope?* Sure. No one realized that the rope was taking the most pressure of all. It was the rope, being tugged from two determined sides, that was right in the middle. That rope had to be strong or everyone lost in the long run.

Sound like a familiar position? Then you must be a distributor. In the coin-op tug-of-war the distributor is the rope. He has contact with two sides--operators who trust him explicitly and manufacturers who count on him to sell--and each one wants his undivided loyalty. Operators fully expect to get honest assessments of new games and a fair deal on all purchases. Manufacturers anticipate and expect that their distributors will buy whatever they introduce.

I'm not naive enough to believe that those two expectations always go hand in hand. We all know that many games are never hits or earn a good return on investment. It's a tough fence to straddle when you are expected to sell a game that you know is not going to do very well to people who trust your opinion.

There are also the times that a manufacturer has introduced a game in dedicated form *only*. Of course, he assured his distributors that it would *never* come out as a kit. SURPRISE! I can't imagine what it must be like to invest big bucks in games only to see the manufacturer offering the kit for hundreds less. But the worst part is trying to explain it to the customers who believed in you.

Then finally comes a game that everybody, I mean *everybody*, wants. The distributor calls to order his games, happy that he will finally be buying something he knows he can sell. SURPRISE! Production has not been as speedy as the manufacturer was hoping and it will be awhile before the distributor can get any games. The distributor makes the proper excuses to the operator, then bugs the manufacturer to *please* get some games. In the meantime, the operator has the privilege of buying the game anywhere he can get one.

Of course, if a distributor has been supportive of the manufacturer when luke warm games were introduced, doesn't it stand to reason that he will get priority treatment when a hot game comes along?

But that brings us to a very sticky dilemma. This industry has seen the rise and fall of many manufacturers. They are hot one year and may be out of the running the next. No one has any idea which company will have the really hot product. But distributors who are handling virtually all of the major manufacturers are affected the most. They can't drop lines *in case* that company has the next hot game.

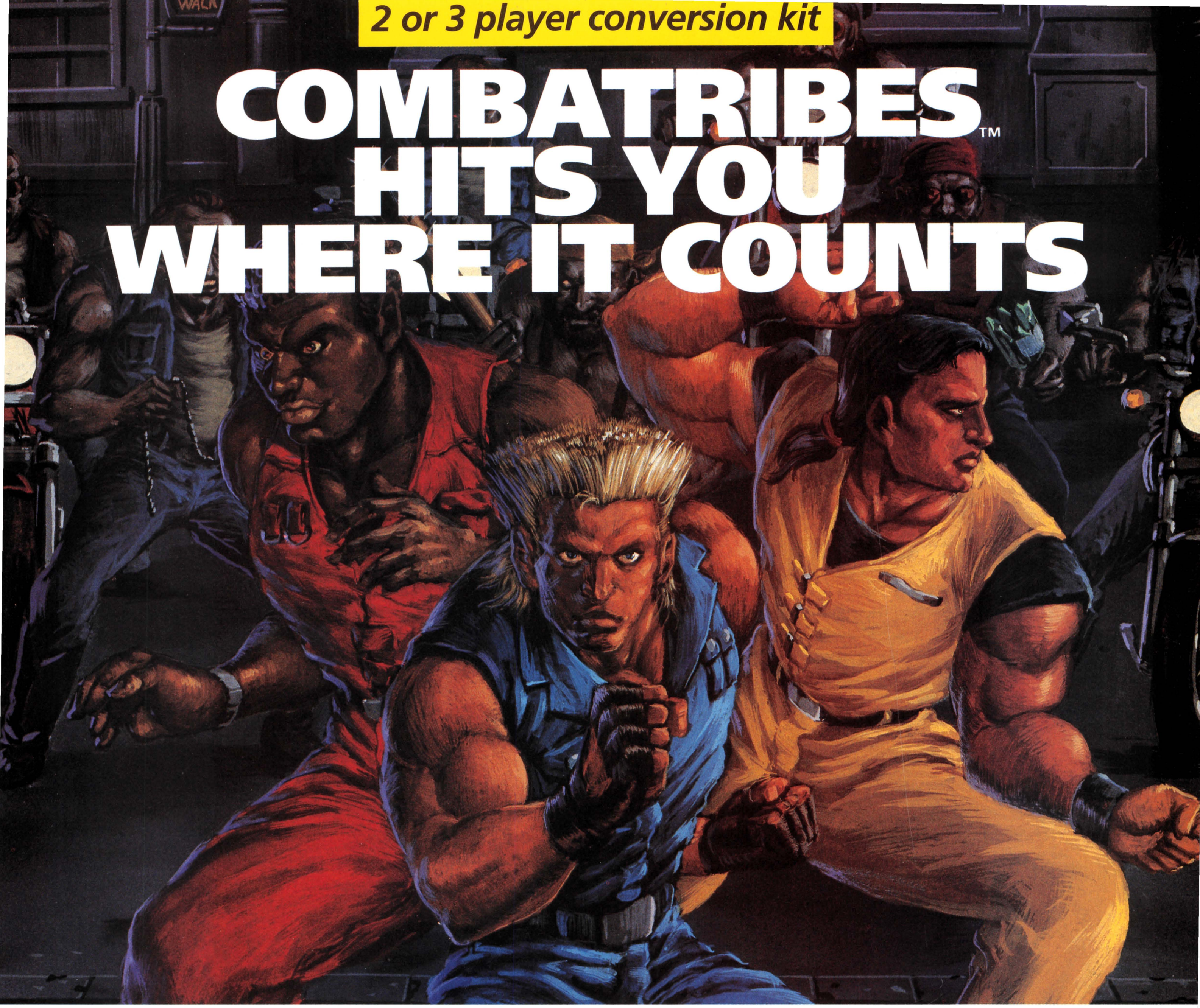
Operators, on the other hand, are not locked into one particular distributor. While most operators do have their loyalties, getting the latest must-have game is a matter of survival. Operators also have the luxury of not buying. Operators today are not so willing to take a chance on games that are not proven.

Many distributors also operate. While other operators may complain that it is unfair competition, I think they would be surprised to know that games they wouldn't buy end up on their distributor's route. In fact, some distributors I've talked to actually get complaints from their own route managers that they are the last in line to get hot games!

I think in digesting the role distributors play in our industry, it's much easier to understand the position the rope was in during our tug-of-war. If only it could talk! Since it can't, we'll talk with some distributors instead! ☐

Valerie Cognevich

Valerie Cognevich
Editor



...Right in the cash box.

Get set for non-stop action, and non-stop profits. Combatribes is one of the hottest arcade games in years. And early test markets prove it.

Here's street fighting like never before, incorporating the latest advances in graphics capabilities. Players won't believe all they can do. And you'll hardly believe all the quarters coming in.

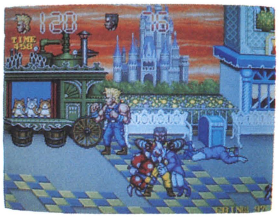
THE COMBATRIBES™

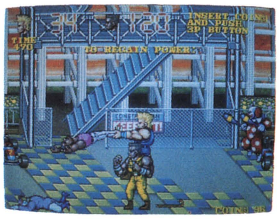
Another Technos™ first.

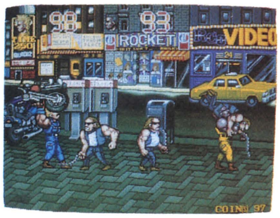
Combatribes is easily adaptable as either a 2-player or 3-player game—the choice is yours. **A flip of a dipswitch** is all it takes.

- Horizontal monitor.
- JAMMA adaptable universal conversion kit.
- Buy-in and continuation feature.
- Complete with graphics and hardware to convert multi-player cabinet.

Get ready. 'Cause Combatribe's going to get you— making every square foot count, right where it counts most. In your cash box.


Double elbow headbash


Feet-swing a villian


Lift and hurl motorcycles

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Jukebox license amnesty extended

Jukebox owners and operators have been granted an additional two months to comply with the new jukebox licensing procedure administered by the Jukebox License Office. The joint announcement was made by the AMOA and the three performing rights organizations: ASCAP, BMI, and SESAC.

The amnesty period has, therefore, been extended from June 1 to Aug. 1, 1990. No new copyright infringement lawsuits will be filed against any jukebox operator who submits two signed copies of the new license agreement, including the Schedule A, and a check for the appropriate license fee payable to the Jukebox License Office, by the new deadline of Aug. 1.

Said AMOA's Doc Ringo, "We're pleased and encouraged with the positive response from the jukebox industry so far. We hope that this goodwill gesture by the performing rights organizations will encourage further compliance with the new jukebox licensing procedures."

The greater the level of operator compliance, the lower the fees will be next year. It obviously, then, behooves everyone with a jukebox to do his or her part. Signed licenses and payments should be submitted to the Jukebox License Office, P.O. Box 5458, New York, NY 10185-0044. Jukebox operators with questions can call the office at (800) 955-5853.

S.O.S. Good Stuff president David Chazen (kneeling) with the Junior High School #56 chapter of Junior Achievement.

Junior Achievement kids get "Good Stuff"

In a continuing effort to involve the local community, S.O.S. Good Stuff Corp., a Long Island City, N.Y.-based stuffed toy manufacturer, recently played host to 30 12-year-old members of the Junior High School #56 chapter of Junior Achievement. Company executives conducted a private tour of their new facilities and previewed S.O.S. Good Stuff's new product line, featuring "Milkshake the Floppy Dog" and other unusual floppy styles.

The students, all interested in business careers, peppered the toy executives with questions ranging from product development to bankruptcies in the toy industry. They were treated afterward to a pizza and soda lunch. Upon leaving, the students were allowed to choose a Good Stuff plush animal of their choice.

"We were pleased to be able to give Junior Achievement a chance to learn firsthand what the toy business is all about," said company president David Chazen. "Since everyone at S.O.S. Good Stuff loves to talk about their job, we feel the kids came away with the understanding that you can be serious in business while not losing your sense of fun."

WICO buys Seeburg line

WICO Distribution Corp. has purchased the rights to exclusively manufacture and distribute Seeburg 45 rpm phonograph parts and supplies. Initially, the majority of Seeburg parts will be stocked only in the Niles, Ill., distribution center.

WICO will rely on customer demand to decide if recently discontinued items should be reinstated. According to a WICO spokesman, "This purchase ensures a ready supply of 45 rpm parts for Seeburg customers."

For more information, contact WICO at (800) 323-0765.

Dollar coin survey

In late May, *USA Today* ran a "phone in your opinion" survey of interest to the coin-op industry. The question was, "Should we replace dollar bills with dollar coins?"

Unfortunately, though, the poll was rather limited. Instead of printing results from a broad cross-section of respondents, the newspaper went with a six-person "man in the street" format. Not surprisingly, the votes were split.

"Other polls seem to indicate that the American people still aren't ready to abandon the dollar bill," said Jim Benfield of The Coin Coalition, the lobbying organization behind the push for federal dollar coin legislation. "But what's new? We're pressing forward. There are going to be further congressional hearings on the matter this summer."

Rowe International
and Rowe's Participating Distributors
Announce

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6 Months No Payments On LaserStar® CD100

Offer Valid During June and July 1990

Void where prohibited by law

See your local participating Rowe distributor
for down payment terms, qualifications and details

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FINAL MONTH!

AMOA booth space sold out

All 682 available booths for AMOA Expo '90 have been sold, according to AMOA spokesman Fred Newton. It will take place in New Orleans on Oct. 25-27 at the Convention Center.

Educational seminars at Expo '90 will address such technical and management issues as the future of music (45 rpm and CD jukeboxes), the new jukebox licensing agreement, pool table and pinball maintenance, video gaming amusement equipment, employee/labor relations, customer service, and pool and dart leagues.

For more information on the show, contact AMOA, 111 E. Wacker Drive, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 565-4602; FAX (312) 565-4658.

Williams adds to distributor network

Williams Electronics Games has appointed three new authorized distributors: American Vending Sales in Elk Grove Village, Ill.; Warehouse of Games in St. Louis, Mo.; and Mexel in Guadalajara, Mexico.

"We are very proud of our distributor network and feel that it is the best in the business," said Marty Glazman, vice president of sales and marketing. "With these announcements, we hope we can be even more responsive to operators looking for quality Williams equipment."

Pioneer, Exidy move

Pioneer Laser Entertainment Inc. and Exidy Inc. have both relocated to new facilities. Pioneer's new address is 2265 E. 220th St., Long Beach, CA 90810. The phone number is (213) 746-6337; general correspondence FAX (213) 816-5111; sales order FAX (213) 816-5110.

Exidy's new address is 2688 C Middlefield Road, Redwood City, CA 94063. The phone numbers are (415) 364-5201 and (415) 325-5814 for orders. The FAX numbers are (415) 364-5286 and (415) 325-5817 for orders.

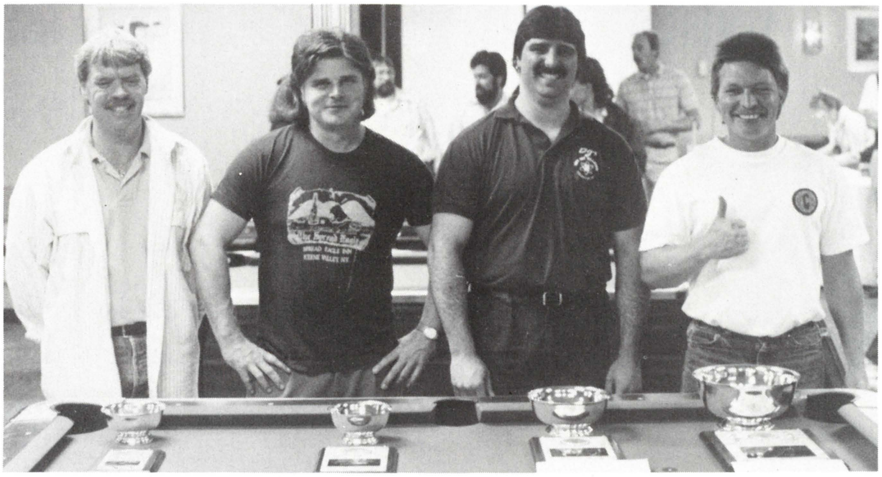
SEGA'S
TIME-OUT
for the family

What's wrong with this picture? The Time-Out chain of 88 game rooms and family entertainment centers is no longer owned by Sega. Edison Brothers Stores recently purchased the nationwide chain, which experienced sales of about $33 million in 1989.

Bell loses round in Miss. court

John Bell of Bell's Music Co. in Vicksburg, Miss., has failed in his bid to have a felony indictment for racketeering thrown out. His attorneys wanted it dismissed on grounds that Bell had signed an agreement with the state attorney general's office, protecting him from prosecution if he ceased operating illegal video poker machines.

Circuit Judge Isadore Patrick said ruling on the agreement would mean deciding if Bell is innocent or guilty of gambling activity—an issue that should be decided by a jury. Defense attorney Travis Vance Jr. said he will appeal this ruling, along with an earlier one, to the state Supreme Court.



These four gentlemen were the top finishers in the 14th Annual Northern New York 8-Ball Championship, held May 6 in Plattsburgh, N.Y. Serving as tournament directors were Upstate Vending Service, Valley Vending Service, and A.S. Hardy Co. Pictured with their silver bowls, (l-r): Ray Scrivin, 4th place; Harry Aver, 3rd place; David Varano, 2nd place; and Harley Mattila, 1st place.

Valley honors NSM

The management of Valley Recreation Products and NSM-Loewen of West Germany met recently at the 4th Annual Valley World Cup Championships to celebrate a significant marketing achievement: NSM's placement of over 20,000 Valley *Royal Dartes* electronic dart games in Europe.

Besides the traditional champagne toast and cake-cutting ceremony, Valley president Chuck Milhem presented NSM president Ullrich Schulze with a beautiful Steuben crystal lion commemorating the sales milestone.

NSM is Valley's exclusive distributor for *Royal Dartes* in Europe. Over the past three years, NSM has actively promoted the product and increased the player base with major national and international tournaments, leagues, exhibitions, and on-site promotional support.

''This comprehensive promotional effort has been a major factor in NSM's phenomenal marketing success,'' Milhem said. ''It has clearly established them as the industry leader in electronic dart machine sales throughout Europe. The association between our two companies is something unique. We are extremely proud of it.''

Valley president Chuck Milhem (l) with NSM president Ullrich Schulze.

WAREHOUSE of GAMES

Proudly standing by the new sign at company headquarters are Warehouse staff members, (l-r): Kenny Holthaus, Steve David, Fred Wait, James Myint, and Mark Schoenberg.

Warehouse of Games adds new lines

Warehouse of Games in St. Louis, Mo., recently added three new lines to its enlarging product base: American Sammy, Strata, and Williams Electronics.

In two short years, partners Barry Schraier and Larry Potashnick have built a full-line distributorship that includes 18 manufacturer lines. Also available from Warehouse are products by American Shuffleboard, Arachnid, Atari, Capcom, Dixie-Narco, Grayhound, ICE, Leland, Mars, Merit, NSM, Premier, Romstar, Tecmo, and Tornado.

There was another company addition on April 7: the birth of 8-pound, 9-ounce Cory Evan Schraier. Congratulations to Barry and his wife Alyssa, who also have another child, 17-month-old Jeffrey.

The Dynamo Corporation has given Brady Distributing its award for most video system sales in 1989. (Also recognized were Betson Enterprises for overall sales and Operators Distributor for pool sales.) Pictured, (l-r): Damon Paramore of Dynamo, Tom Kiel of Brady Distributing, Jon Brady, Bill Rickett of Dynamo, and Blair Norris of Brady Distributing.

NAMA preparing for convention in Florida

The National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA) will stage its 44th Annual National Convention/Exhibit in Orlando—a first for the association. Themed ''Your Threshold to the 21st Century,'' the event will be held Oct. 11-13 at the Orange County Convention Center. Some evening events will also take place at the Peabody Hotel.

Because this is NAMA's first national meeting in Orlando, ''several significant changes have been made to maximize the fun and business value,'' said NAMA president James A. Rost. To help convention-goers and their families receive full benefit from the exhibits, educational sessions, and attractions like Disney World and the Kennedy Space Center, NAMA has restructured the convention format by:

* Compressing the schedule from four days to three. This year, there will be no educational sessions or exhibit hours on Sunday.

* Opening the exhibit hall earlier each day (at 10 a.m., rather than noon as in the past) and closing it earlier (at 3 p.m. instead of 5 p.m.).

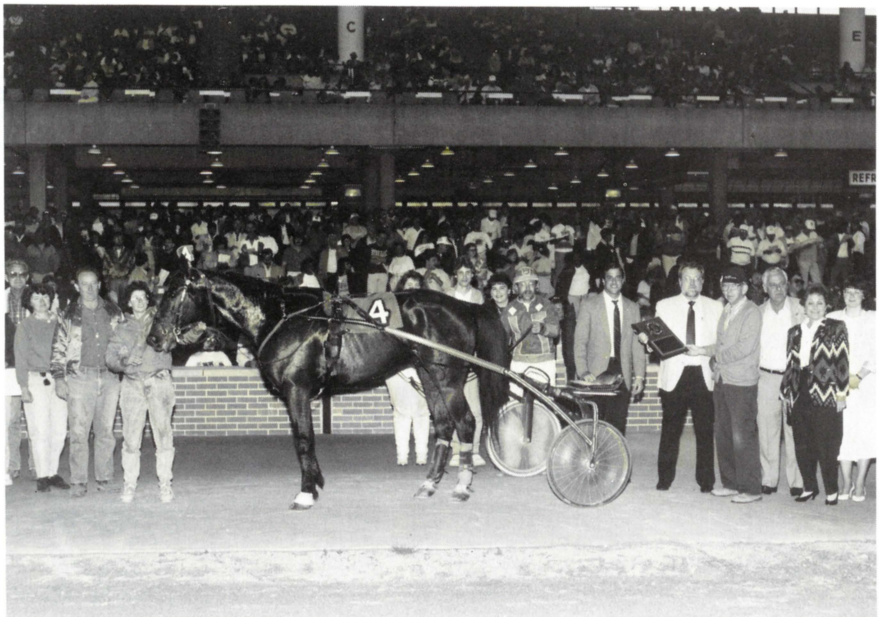
* Offering numerous education sessions at various times throughout the day.

''These changes have been made due to the uniqueness of Orlando and to suit the needs of our exhibitors and attendees,'' said Richard M. Geerdes, NAMA's director of membership, conventions, and education.

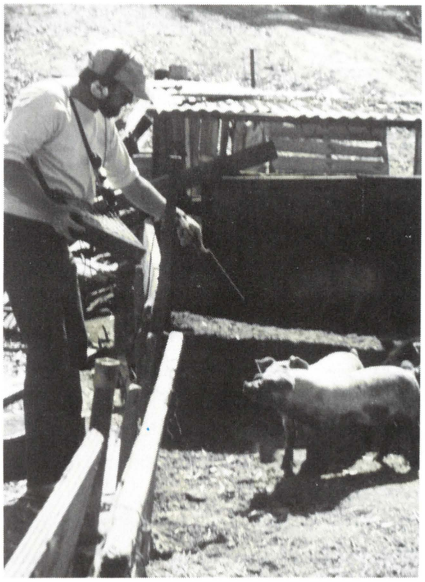
One thing that hasn't changed is the plan to hold a separate Financial Management Seminar during the two days immediately prior to the convention. Enrollment will be limited for this 10th seminar, to be held Oct. 9-10 at the Peabody Hotel.

Also, for the first time, a single toll-free phone call will enable attendees to make their hotel, airline, and rental car reservations all at once. Discounts on these travel arrangements are available through NAMA's Hotel and Travel Desk, (800) 666-6757. Delta and American Airlines have again been designated the two official airlines, offering discounted fares.

To register, or receive more information, contact Geerdes at NAMA, 20 N. Wacker Drive, Suite 3500, Chicago, IL 60606-3102; (312) 346-0370; FAX (312) 704-4140.



Happy Okey was the winner of an Ohio Coin Machine Association-sponsored race at Scioto Downs on May 18. The event was just one of the festivities held in conjunction with OCMA's state show. Pictured on the right side of the photograph, (l-r): driver/trainer Mark Stockwell, OCMA administrative assistant David Corey, first vice president Ron Rentz, owner F. Weldon Stockwell, AMOA president Jack Kerner, wife Diane Kerner, and Mrs. Patricia Rentz.



Some coin-op R&D staffs will stop at nothing to get *just* the right sound effects for a game. The Leland Corporation's staff went on a recent field trip to a pig farm to record actual pig squeals and other noises for its next game, *Pig Out*.

Operator featured on MTV News

A crew from Music Television (MTV) paid a visit to Stan Harris & Co. in Philadelphia on May 30. They were there almost five hours to tape a special on pinball, according to Sharon Harris. Both Sharon and father Stan were interviewed, and footage was taken of antique pinballs, some newer models, and representative samplings of backglass art.

Sharon has also been working with a Philadelphia radio station to promote pinball on its talk show programs. ''The host is very high on the whole idea of promoting the potential leagues and tournaments that the Pinball Association has planned for the future.''

Birmingham Vending gets Valley award

Birmingham Vending, which has distributorships in Alabama and Orlando, Fla., was named Valley Recreation Products' ''Distributor of the Year'' at the most recent FAVA state show. Those so

In the future, terrorists rule the skies and the seas.

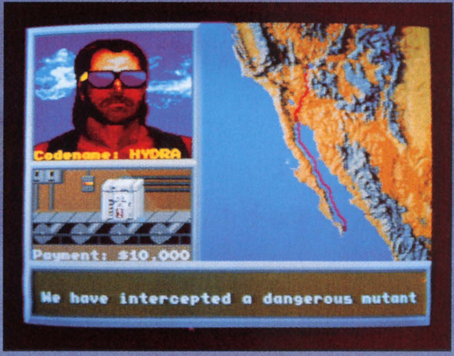
When special, top-secret packages like mutant virus strains and doomsday devices absolutely, positively have to get through, the only courier governments can call on is you — codename: Hydra.

With nine missions to complete, success rests on your ability to skillfully drive your trusty Hydracraft, using its supercharged speed and firepower to blast past enemy forces like boats, jet skis, zeppelins, choppers, fighters, hovercraft and halftracks.

For your customers, Hydra delivers a driving-flying-shooting game that explodes with fast-paced action, heart-pounding excitement and incredible animation on stunning, digitized landscapes.

In doing so, Hydra delivers something equally exciting to you: profits.

When it absolutely, positively has to get there, the only courier to call is Hydra.



Codename: HYDRA

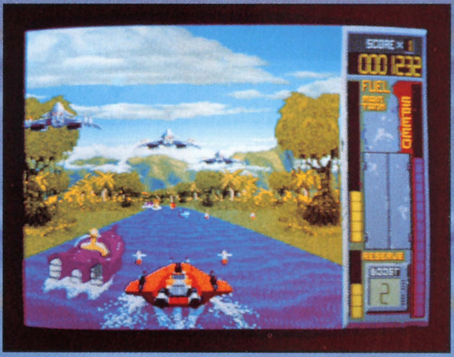
Payment: $10,000

We have intercepted a dangerous mutant

SOMETIMES AIR MAIL JUST CAN'T GET THROUGH.

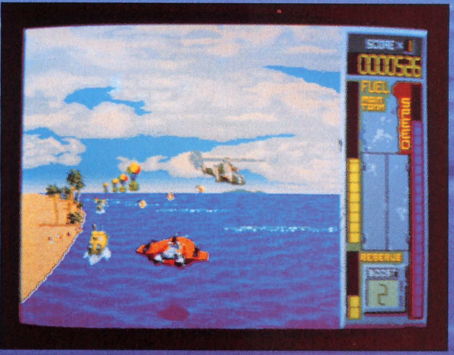
HYDRA™

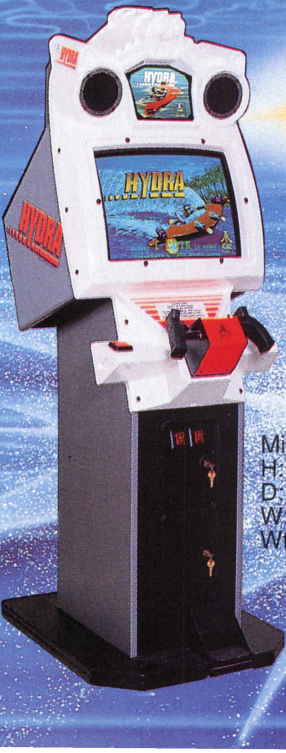
The waterways are filled with enemy craft; the skies rain missiles from deadly fighters.



HYDRA comes to you in a sleek mini-upright cabinet or in kit form. Universal kit includes game PCB, flight controller, boost button assemblies, artwork that fits both 19" and 25" cabinets (monitor bezel, artwork for header, control panel and side decals), and JAMMA harness.

A boost button sends your Hydracraft into the air to take on choppers and air balloons.





Mini-upright cabinet
H: 71" (180 cm)
D: 34" (86 cm)
W: 24" (61 cm)
Wt: 225 lbs (102 kg)

ATARI®
GAMES

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Milpitas, CA 95035 ☎ 408/434-3700

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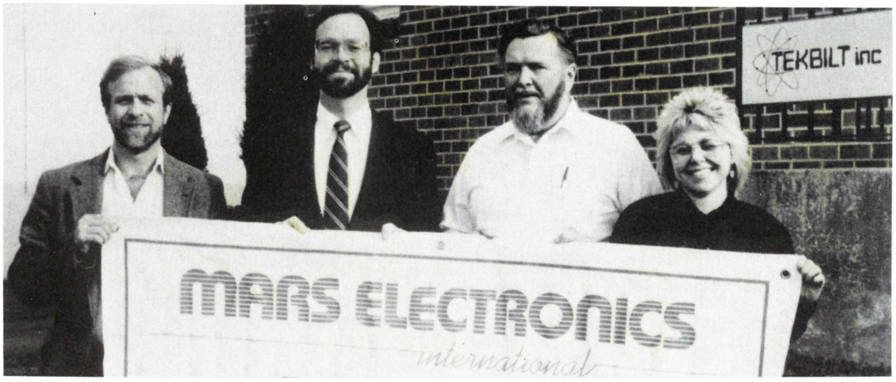
honored are presented with a cougar's head.

"Birmingham Vending has had an outstanding marketing year; Valley was proud to be part of their efforts throughout 1989," said Alan Schafer, Valley's vice president of marketing. "I look toward another outstanding year in 1990 and expect that the management and staff of Birmingham Vending will be striving to maintain the award, although they know the challenge that this entails among our fine nationwide family of distributors. They all have their eye on the award."

Carol Ann Lally, daughter of publisher Carol Lally, was recently married to Frederick Durand in New Orleans. The couple will reside in the city.



From left: Buzz Bruner, president of Tekbilt Inc.; Mike Graham, customer support manager for Mars Electronics; and Gene Tomlin and Helene Lyons of Tekbilt.

Mars tabs Tekbilt

Mars Electronics International has named Tekbilt Inc. as an authorized service center for its VFM2 and VFM4 bill acceptors, according to Steve Kindler, national sales manager for games/amusements.

"The games and amusements industry is an important market for Mars Electronics, and we are dedicated to providing operators with the level of service they require," he said. "Tekbilt has a great deal of experience in the industry and will be an excellent partner for us in meeting the industry's needs."

Tekbilt president Buzz Bruner says his company will have two technicians dedicated to servicing these bill acceptors; more technicians will be added as needed.

"Immediate turnaround service is very important to this industry," Bruner said. "Operators need to get bill acceptors repaired and back in service as soon as possible. Our goal is to provide the level of service that operators want and need."

Tekbilt is the 32nd Mars authorized service center in the United States and Canada. It is the eighth such service center opened in the last two years. The address is 3979 Mann Road, Huntingdon Valley Industrial Center, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006. The telephone number is (800) 666-7776.

For more information, contact Mars Electronics International Inc., Customer Service Dept., 1301 Wilson Drive, West Chester, PA 19380; (800) 345-8215.

TRACK PAK
DENSO

The Make a Wish Foundation and the Leland Corp. brought cheer to Massachusetts' Sean Noel, 15, who has Hodgkin's disease. Sean rode with Ivan Stewart on the Las Vegas Speedway in May, then received a *Super Off Road* game thanks to Leland, New England Coin-op, and Overnite Trucking. Good news — the disease is now in remission!

Two visitors from the West Coast—Donna Cristich (l) of Sega and Jackie Sherman of Atari (second from right)—stopped by Play Meter's office while on a recent visit to New Orleans. They were here to survey the Convention Center and the New Orleans area before the upcoming AMOA Expo in October.

ThunderJaws™

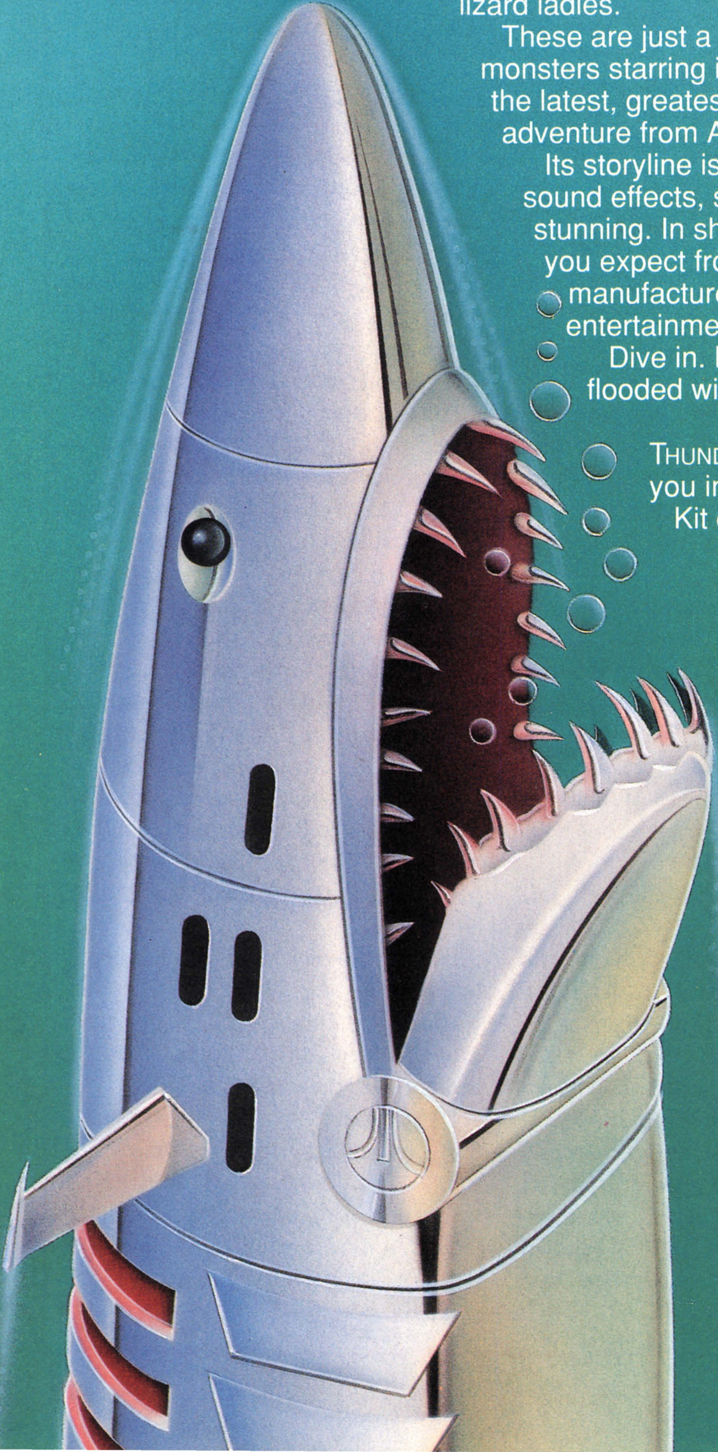
When it's not safe to go into the water. And the crowd can't wait to dive in.

If one Great White lurking in the waters can become a smash hit, imagine the feeding frenzy when you have giant cybernetic sharks! And mutant mantas, bionic wolves and lizard ladies.

These are just a few of the menacing monsters starring in THUNDERJAWS — the latest, greatest undersea adventure from Atari Games.

Its storyline is spellbinding; its sound effects, sizzling; its graphics, stunning. In short, it's everything you expect from the premier manufacturer of arcade entertainment.

Dive in. Before you get flooded with customers.



THUNDERJAWS comes to you in kit form.

Kit components include:

- Game PCB
- Joystick and fire button assemblies
- Universal artwork fits both 19" and 25" cabinets; includes monitor bezel, artwork for header, control panel and side decals.
- JAMMA harness

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Atari Games Corporation

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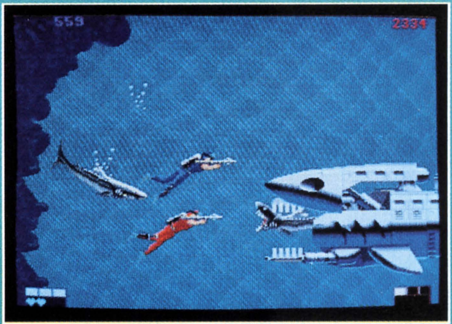
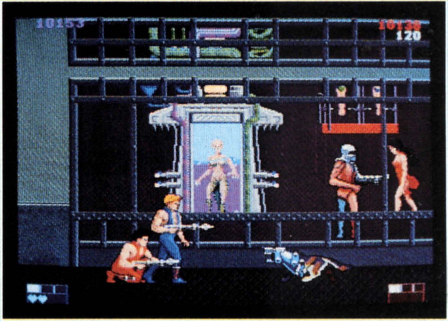
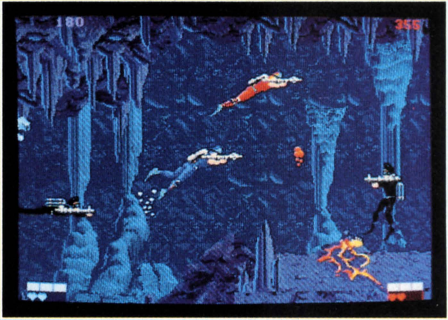


Dive through Cybershark-infested waters to locate a submerged laboratory.



Rescue beautiful maidens who are being transformed into lizard monsters!



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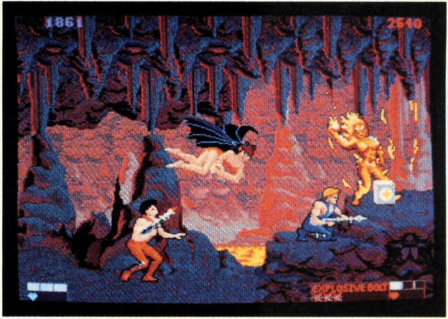

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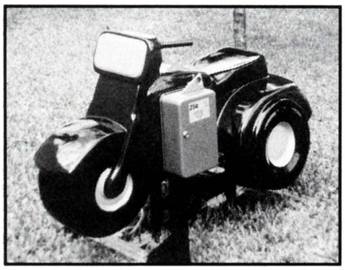

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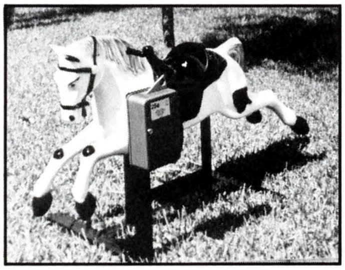

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STATE UPDATE

California

The Santa Clarita Planning Commission has unanimously denied a conditional use permit for a proposed shopping mall video arcade. In fact, the commission is seeking an ordinance designed specifically for arcades.

"I would like to ask that staff begin with research and preparation of an arcade ordinance," said commissioner Pat Modugno, who went so far as to recommend an arcade moratorium. The proposed 1,750-square-foot arcade was to be located in a shopping mall currently under construction.

Jerry Zemming, a partner in Arcade Mania, was unable to convince the commission that arcades can be positive meeting places for youths, who often have few such alternatives. "Arcades can be managed as a credit to the community. They can be managed safely and securely."

Louisiana

On May 31, the House Criminal Justice Committee voted a video poker bill out of committee and on to the House floor for a full vote, making it the furthest any such bill has gotten in the Louisiana Legislature.

Fifty-three votes are needed to send the measure to the Senate. Should the bill pass in a Senate committee, then on the Senate floor, it would arrive on the desk of Gov. Buddy Roemer. He has said that he would not interfere with any successful bills regarding a lottery or riverboat gambling. It is hoped, therefore, that the same holds true for video pokers.

"We're ecstatic right now," said David Goudeau of Gerald's Amusements in Lafayette, La., the vice president of the Louisiana Amusement and Music Operators Association. "If the lottery flies, we'll fly right along with it. Even if it fails, I still think we have a good shot at passing our bill. But a successful lottery bill would definitely better our chances."

Goudeau added that in the event the bill fails in the House, it will be re-introduced on the Senate side. Only 20 votes are needed in the Senate, and some senators have already expressed support to LAMOA members. If the bill passed in the Senate first, it would go back to the House for reconsideration.

In other news, the Louisiana Amusement and Music Operators Association has elected a new slate of officers for 1990. They are as follows: Nick Putch of Southern Music & Vending Service in Shreveport, president; Goudeau, vice president; Larry Haley of Larry Haley Amusements in Pineville, secretary/treasurer; and Chris Kanellakis of V.J. Vending/Melody Music in Lake Charles, immediate past president.

New York

Cigarette vending operators in New York City thought they'd heard it all. The state has imposed a tax hike of six cents a pack, along with a yearly fee of $25 per machine. Now, the city council is proposing a *total ban* on cigarette vending city-wide.

A council committee held its first hearing on the matter in early May, which prompted the AMOA-NY membership to marshal its forces. The association has met to plan its strategy and raise money for the political action committee.

"So many people came forward to testify—operators and those who would lose their jobs if a total ban went through—that another hearing has been scheduled," said AMOA-NY president Robert Herman. "A lot of things still need to be ironed out, like whether there will be a total or only a partial ban, what the penalties will be for those who let minors buy the cigarettes, who will be penalized (operators and/or locations), and so on."

No one is saying that cigarette smoking is a healthy, positive activity for kids, Herman contends. The question is, why single out cigarette machines as a scourge and not over-the-counter sales?

"The cigarette machines just sit there; they don't entice people to smoke," he said. "There's no attract mode. Kids smoke because of peer pressure and other factors. A total ban on cigarette machines is not the answer to the problem."

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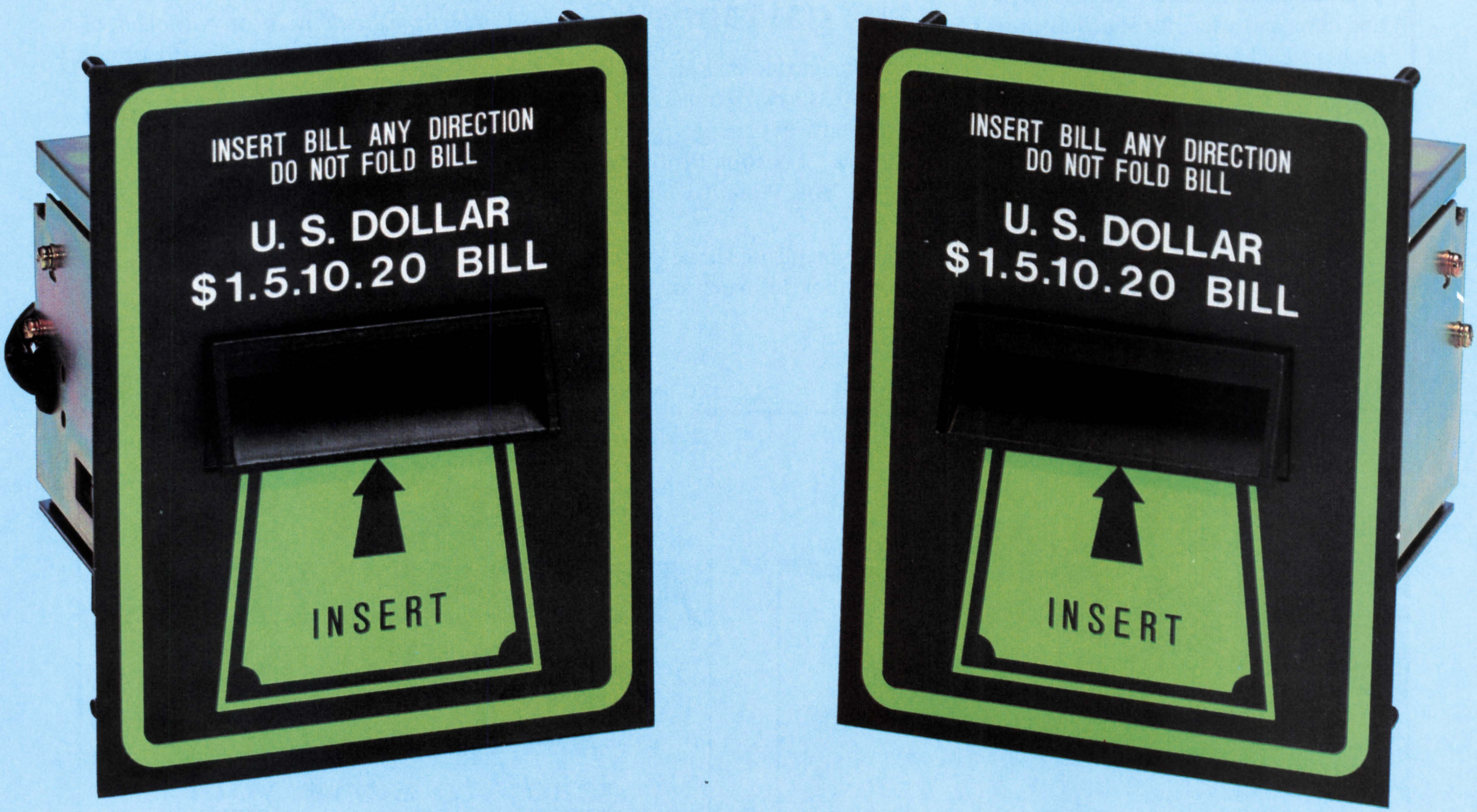
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Shuffleboards for fun & profit

I have been selling shuffleboards for five years. Although I am relatively new in the coin-op industry, I have talked to a lot of operators and distributors. I am learning that operators want games with a long life span and a fair return on investment.

Shuffleboards can be as lucrative as pool and darts. There are leagues for pool and darts and a few for shuffleboards. I have traveled a great deal and am surprised at the number of people from the ages of 21 to 35 that don't know what a shuffleboard is. Just think of the hundreds of thousands of young people in that age group who love competition.

The Shuffleboard Federation in Northville, Mich., puts out a small magazine for shuffleboard players, informing them of all the tournaments around the country.

Some distributors believe it's time to get back to basics. Operators, help your locations bring in more revenue. Promote shuffleboards like they were brand new games. You may be pleasantly surprised.

Cheryl Tracey
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Can I get tapes?

Your magazine had an article about Charles Ross's two seminars at the recent ACME show in Chicago. The two subjects were "Location Profit Analysis" and "So You Want To Impress Your Banker."

Could you please let me know if tapes and/or other information from these seminars can be purchased.

James Pickett
Automatic Vending,
Muskogee, OK

Charles Ross and Richard Priesmeyer began giving seminars at the AOE show back in 1980. Both always have large crowds. We are talking with them about doing several sessions at ACME next March in Las Vegas. Now to answer your question: yes, you can still purchase the tapes from the show. Most, but not all, of the seminars are on tape—it is at the discretion of the speaker. For more information call Audio Archives International at (818) 957-0874. We hope to see you in Las Vegas next March! □

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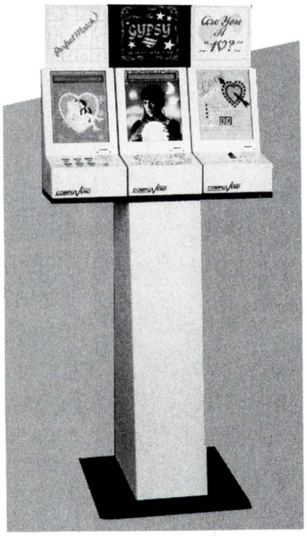

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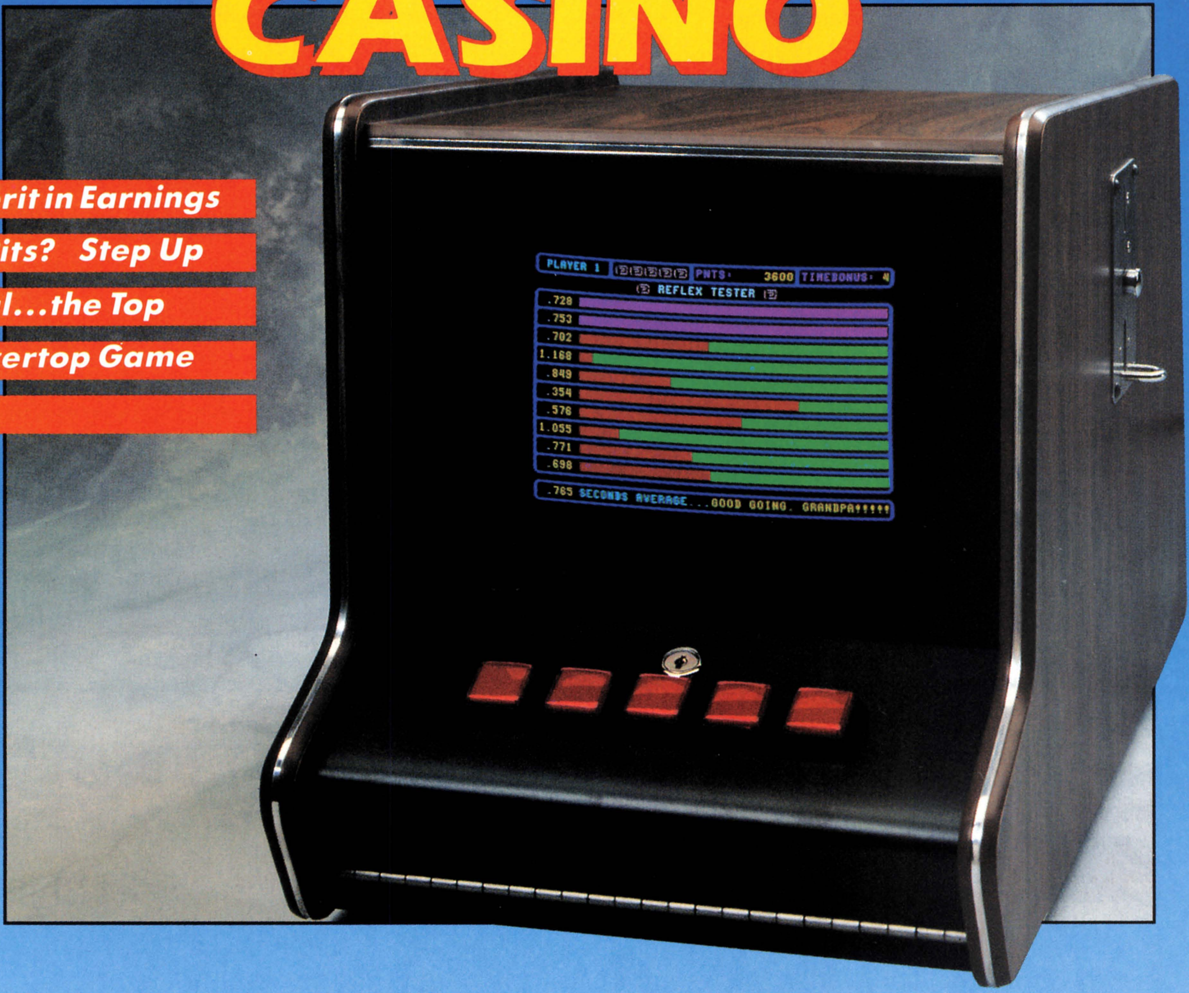
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LETTERS

Dear Play Meter:

Maybe the crawfish supply has been poisoned down there, but whatever has gotten into Chris Caire's system is polluted and disturbing.

Mr. Caire has at his disposal a column—a first-person, somewhat subjective vehicle for addressing issues in our industry. It certainly is a unique opportunity to air out important issues in an entertaining, personally insightful format. But his June piece absolutely astonished me. In it, he described a hypothetical riot instigated by a "highly respected" journalist.

Unfortunately, I was named as the journalist in Mr. Caire's simplistic fable that took the wrong tack to make a salient journalistic point.

Consider, Mr. Caire, that your indiscretion is all the more audible because while you were trying to explain the machinations behind generating a trade magazine, you committed one of the cardinal sins of journalism. Albeit playful, if the article is skimmed you've done nothing more than get a few guffaws at my expense. You libeled me. And that's no hypothesis.

Let me put my cards on the table, Mr. Caire. I'm more than a little perturbed that you took a few discussions we had about the rap group Public Enemy and used it as fodder not only for a slipshod piece of writing, but for background into the felonious fiction you have me acting out in a "hypothetical" situation.

Consider, Mr. Caire, that the example you make me is implicitly racist—equating what is primarily an African-American music with social violence—and you conclude the piece with a patently sexist reference: "The women here are ruthless."

This is all the more shocking considering I began to chat with you after you used your "Last Word" to lambaste rap music some months back, which I maintain is the most living, growing pop market for the last ten years, and, more specific to our industry, a sure jukebox pick in the proper, segmented markets where it thrives.

I took you to task for your unenlightened ruminations on the topic in the hope of explaining what the art form was really about. Instead of learning from the inadequacies of your unstudied perspective, you have only compounded the confusion by inserting my good name in an imaginary, felonious situation.

If you had mentioned a specific manufacturer or operator in the previous two "hypothetical" examples (unlike my imaginary riot, parallel boards and bankruptcy are two very real industry circumstances) Play Meter would be an easy target for litigation.

But does the careless, imaginative Lou Perfidio-incites-a-riot-at-a-Public-Enemy-concert-and-gets-arrested contrivance put you on safe ground? I think not, Mr. Caire. And until you know the ground rules of our profession, maybe you should stick to writing about stylish Cajun restaurants.

To better times,
Lou Perfidio
Vending Times

Chris Caire responds: "If in my attempts to be light-hearted I gave the false impression that Lou was, in fact, arrested, I sincerely apologize. It certainly was not my intent to be malicious or to put Lou in a bad light. It didn't occur to me that readers might believe that my hypothetical situation had really happened. Again, if the message was construed that way, I am sorry." ☐

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UP FRONT

Take a second look at darts

Operators seeking good return on investment have been turning their attention to the old tried-and-true equipment: pool tables, jukeboxes, and redemption. All are equally deserving of attention and inclusion in a balanced equipment mix. But don't miss the new tried-and-true: electronic darts.

It only takes attendance at one large-scale electronic dart competition to become excited about the sport and its growth potential. An event such as the Team Dart V international championship sponsored by the AMOA-NDA provides a good look at the big numbers 2,000 competitors and growing) of devoted players. We're talking about players who have their own set of special darts, just as devoted pool players have their own break-down pool cues.

Teams enthusiastically compete on the local level, bringing added revenue to taverns—where most of the games are located. The players are poised, fix their gazes on the targets, and shoot with high degrees of accuracy. When they meet on the international level it's amazing to witness the skill. Tension mounts as competition narrows down to the ''best of the best.'' Then comes the outbursts of the winners, high-fives all around, accompanied by much hugging and handshaking in the process. These players, and the operators who sponsor the teams, are clearly enjoying the sport and the quality level of play.

Such excitement is contagious, which is why more international teams are joining the dart ranks. This year alone, observers from Spain and New Zealand have been carried along with the growing interest in darts and now promise teams at next year's Team Dart VI. These teams will join the already entrenched teams from Canada, Japan, France, and Germany.

Electronic darts is one category of equipment blessed with three very reliable manufacturers, each offering a choice of models. Electronic darts don't go out of style; they're timeless. Early models can be updated and no one feels as if their games are ''over the hill.''

In addition, the manufacturers offer operator support in the form of handbooks filled with tips for organizing leagues and promoting them. Field promotion staff members will be more than happy to work with a sincere operator seeking to start up a program in his area.

To really reap the benefits of darts, the sport must be promoted and promoted well. As Shakespeare said, ''Therein lies the rub.'' Some operators have shied away from electronic darts because of the time required to promote the sport. Operators who do invest the time and effort are boundless in their enthusiasm for darts. Electronic darts can be played all year 'round, but autumn and spring are prime times for league play. It takes a real commitment to the sport and time to develop a loyal battery of players. Once set in place, interest grows. League programs work for pool tables and they've proven to work for darts.

In these cost-conscious times of re-evaluating investments, darts require a second look. ''Slow and steady'' is often preferable to ''fast and risky.'' At the rate some games nosedive, it's no wonder operators are holding back on new game purchases. There are no guarantees on any new games, but conservatives would be more likely to bet on long-term games such as darts.

Now, more than ever, when taverns are coming under fire because of their alcohol-based existence, it's prudent to focus on bars as locations for friendly social interaction. And what better interaction than organized team sports that keep players (and spectators) returning for the spirit of the competition and camaraderie.

Although enjoyed by everyone, darts draw adult players. Since video games are plainly targeted for the teen and young adult audience, how do we grab those amusement game players for keeps when they've outgrown video? How about converting them to darts? ☐

Bonnie Theard

Bonnie Theard
Managing Editor

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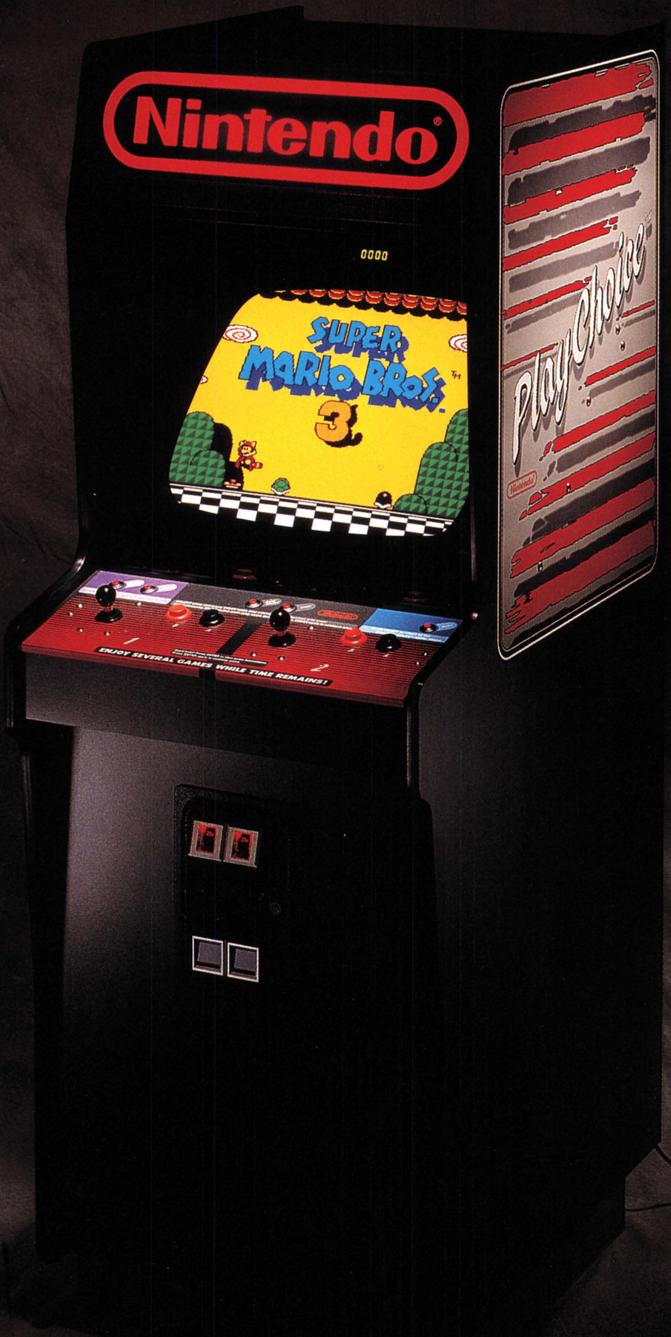
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Lisa Brennan

Nintendo
Coin Operated Division
Nintendo
Donkey Kong

From left: Minoru Arakawa, Kris Holley, Howard Lincoln, Al Stone, Steve Miles, Linda Weber, Jon Pedersen, Donna Hogin, and Tony Harman.

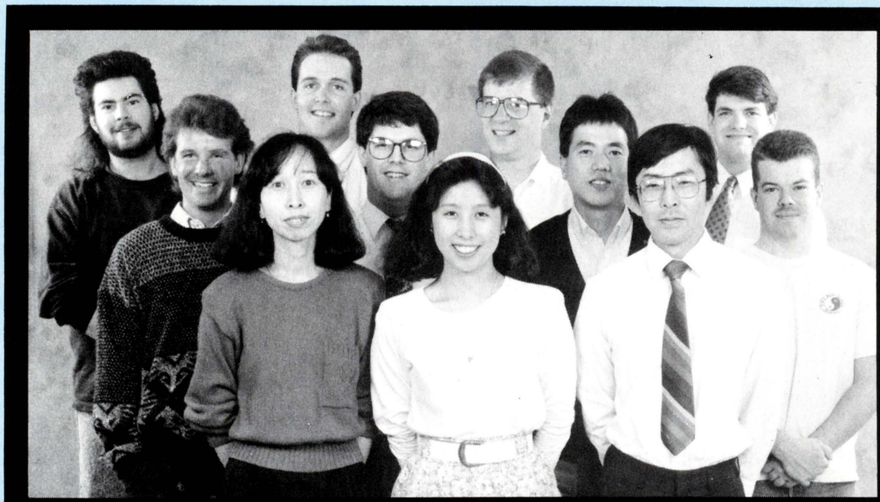
Exploring new coin-op frontiers

With apologies to the captain and crew of the Starship Enterprise, Nintendo is out to conquer the true final frontier of space—floor space, that is.

Its mission: to seek out new locations for game play, to explore promising new software, and to boldly go where no coin-op system has gone before.

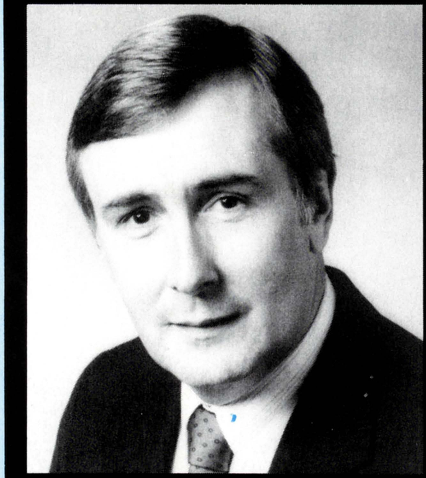
That is Nintendo's goal, as it strives to broaden the exposure of its *PlayChoice* system by placing new game units in heretofore untapped reaches of space. Nintendo's ability to conquer this new frontier will have a major impact on the long-term growth and vitality of the entire coin-op industry.

"Last year the industry underwent some shrinkage as traditional game location sites closed their doors to coin-op," said Al Stone, vice president of sales and marketing. "What has been lost can be recovered by creatively seeking new

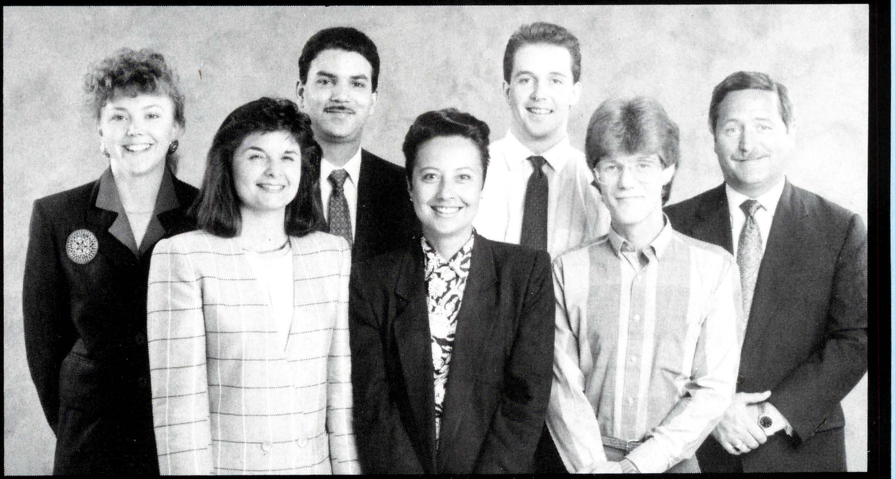


The research and development team, (front, l-r): Hiroko Faulkner Yuka Nakata, and Masahiro Ishizuka: (middle, l-r): Rich Gerard, Tony Harman, Noriyuki Minami, and Sean O'Connor; (back, l-r): Brett Gow, Matt Davison, Wayne Shirk, and Dayv Brooks.

President Minoru Arakawa.

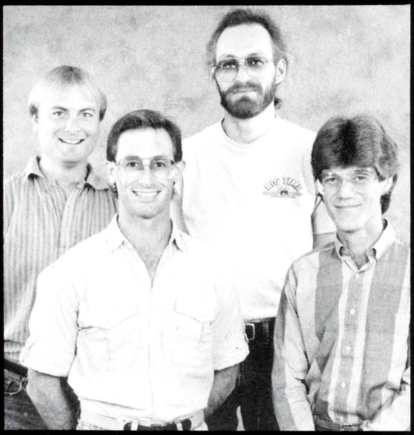


Vice president/general counsel Howard Lincoln.

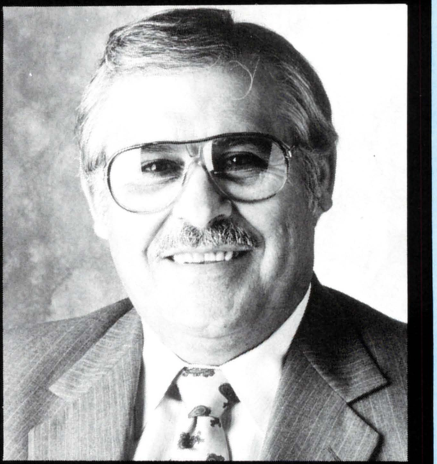


The coin-op division, (l-r): Donna Hogin, Kris Holley, Steve Miles, Linda Weber, Matt Davison, Jon Pedersen, and Al Stone.

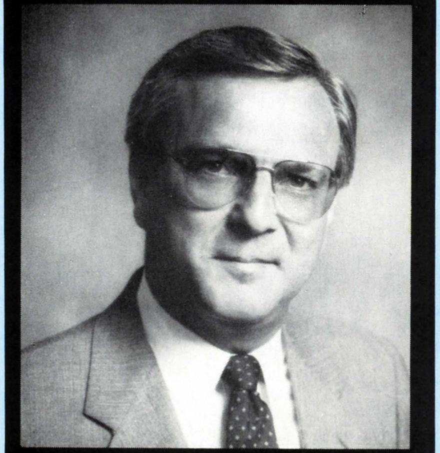
Pete Walton, southern regional manager.



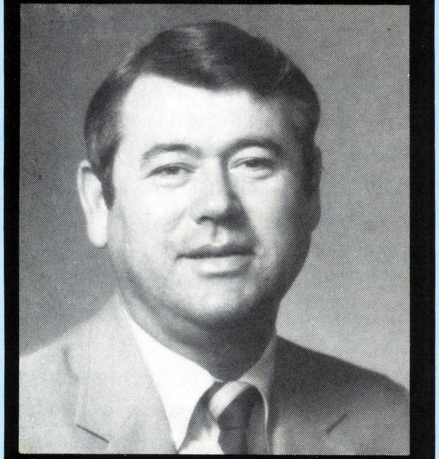
The service crew, (l-r): John Tintinger, Dennis Dove, Tom Oldfin, and Jon Pedersen.



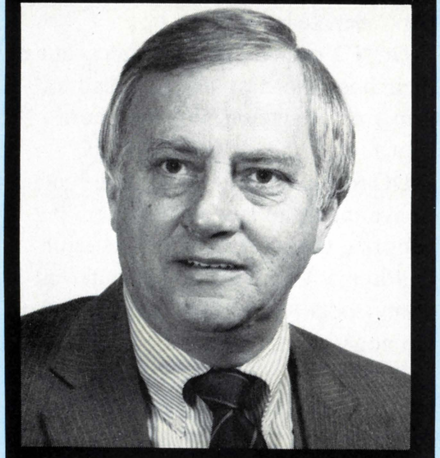
Jerry Monday.



Mike Minor, midwest regional manager.



Art Gallagher, central regional manager.



Chuck Arnold, eastern regional manager.

markets of opportunity.

"Our challenge is to continue to strengthen the power of *PlayChoice* with the cream of the crop in current software, while seeking to attract new play environments for coin-op product in general."

Nintendo's mission is both self-serving and beneficial to the industry—a philosophical line the company has walked for over a decade during its rise to prominence.

While the depth and breadth of Nintendo's U.S. coin-op market is expanding to embrace department and variety stores—as well as grocery chains—the company's international focus has long held a more eclectic vision.

Take a walk into just about any pub in the United Kingdom and you'll no doubt see a Brent Leisure-manufactured *PlayChoice* in action, thanks to the diligent work of Michael Green and David Coren.

For a French twist to the coin-op craze, divert your stroll down the Champs-Elysees for coffee and you'll find a *PlayChoice* put into place by Amiro's Andre Mulon. Likewise, in Spain no tapas feast would be complete without the electronic sounds of a *PlayChoice*, courtesy of Sega S.A.'s Eduardo Morales.

Throughout Europe, *PlayChoice* has been given diverse play in hotels, shops, restaurants, and other public places, as witnessed by its resourceful placement in Belgium by Jan Van de Velde of Seeben and in Italy by Gianfranco Maffiodo of Sipem S.R.L.

Down under in Australia, *PlayChoice* has been given choice status as far out as the outback by Malcom Steinberg of Leisure and Allied Industries.

Perhaps the newest game frontier for Nintendo, as it is for its coin-op partners, is the great playground of Mexico. Under the direction of Mexel's Jacob and Moses Shemaria and Henry Fong, *PlayChoice* has become a leader in bringing the latest and the greatest long-term entertainment value to Nintendo's players south of the border.

While Nintendo's attempt to gain worldwide market penetration for its coin-op hardware has been exemplary, the company is relying on the ultimate power of its software to secure its *PlayChoice* position around the globe.

"Nintendo is the largest software buyer in the world," Stone explained. "Because of our unique position, we are given access to the latest titles under development by the leading licensees. We use our coin-op division, specifically on the *PlayChoice* system, as the proving ground for Nintendo's consumer audience. That's why the hits happen first on our coin-op side."

The marketing of a winning title is the result of a long process of elimination. Game concepts and play action are reviewed and evaluated by over 25 research and development personnel at the company's Redmond, Wash., headquarters, as well as by 100 of their counterparts in Japan.

"Nintendo's **PlayChoice** *system is the proving ground for consumer product. That's why the hits happen first on coin-op."*

Titles that have filtered through this system go into site testing to determine their real-life player appeal. Games passing the test with flying colors will soon be appearing at a coin-op site nearest you—titles such as *Super C, Baseball Stars, Rescue Rangers*, and the new blockbuster, *Dr. Mario*—a game that's sure to give players the bug for long-term play action.

PlayChoice fans can also look forward to *Ninja Gaiden II* and *Captain Skyhawk* debuting worldwide in the months to come.

With Nintendo's new focus on enhancing both the placement scope and the caliber of its *PlayChoice* game system, the future for the company and the industry is wide open. And that offers the promise of improved profits, opportunities, and lots of fun—mission perks that even Captain Kirk would approve of—regardless of where Nintendo's conquests into space might lead. ☐

Lisa Brennan is a free-lance writer who writes for several major corporations in the Seattle area.

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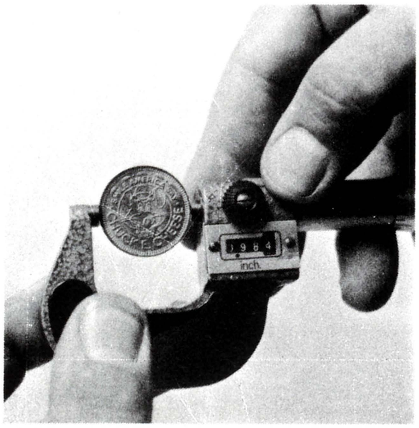

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GUEST COMMENTARY

Marc Mandeltort

Found money on free play

My entry into the coin-op amusement business didn't begin with coin operated equipment. I stumbled onto a large market by renting older equipment, set on free play, to the child care industry.

Would you rather have those *Space Invaders, Asteroids,* and *Pac-Man* games clogging up your warehouse, or would you rather get a check in the mail for $10 per week per machine? Or $59 per month for two machines?

The return on investment is excellent and you will be considered a god by the day-care directors for providing an alternate distraction for those active preschoolers and after-schoolers.

This arrangement benefits the operator in many ways. You don't have to collect coins. You have very few service calls (most service calls are coin-related). You don't have dead wood gathering dust in your shop. You don't have to buy new equipment.

You do have to set up a billing system (monthly preferred), and you should rotate the games every two to four months so the kids don't get bored. You should shop each game thoroughly to provide reliable and, more importantly, SAFE equipment. (Make sure those AC cords are grounded...kids get their fingers *everywhere*).

I've been to many day-care centers and I've seen home video game units and computers there—in pieces on the floor. Home units can't withstand the rigors of daily day-care usage; commercial equipment can. With most home cartridges starting at $40 and going skyward, renting arcade machines is the most effective solution for these centers.

Here are some more do's and don'ts for renting equipment to the day-care centers:

DO use cartoon-themed games with simple controls, such as *Pac-Man, Mappy,* and *Donkey Kong*. Avoid fighting-themed games.

DON'T rent pinball machines on free play. No additional explanation is required.

DO have a brochure or flyer printed explaining your rental or lease plan. Include your policy for rates, rotation of games, service call procedures, etc. Don't request any contracts, stiff deposits, or terms that will scare off these mostly "mom and pop" establishments.

DON'T call on day-care centers during their busy morning drop-off hours (7-9 a.m.) or afternoon pick-up hours (4-6 p.m.).

DO rent jukeboxes to day care centers. Leave them the key and let them put in records they already have, such as children's 45s. This works out well in many spots where kids tear up manual phonographs and records.

With summer here and most day-care centers operating full-time summer camp programs, operators can provide a valuable service to the enormous and still growing child care industry. ☐

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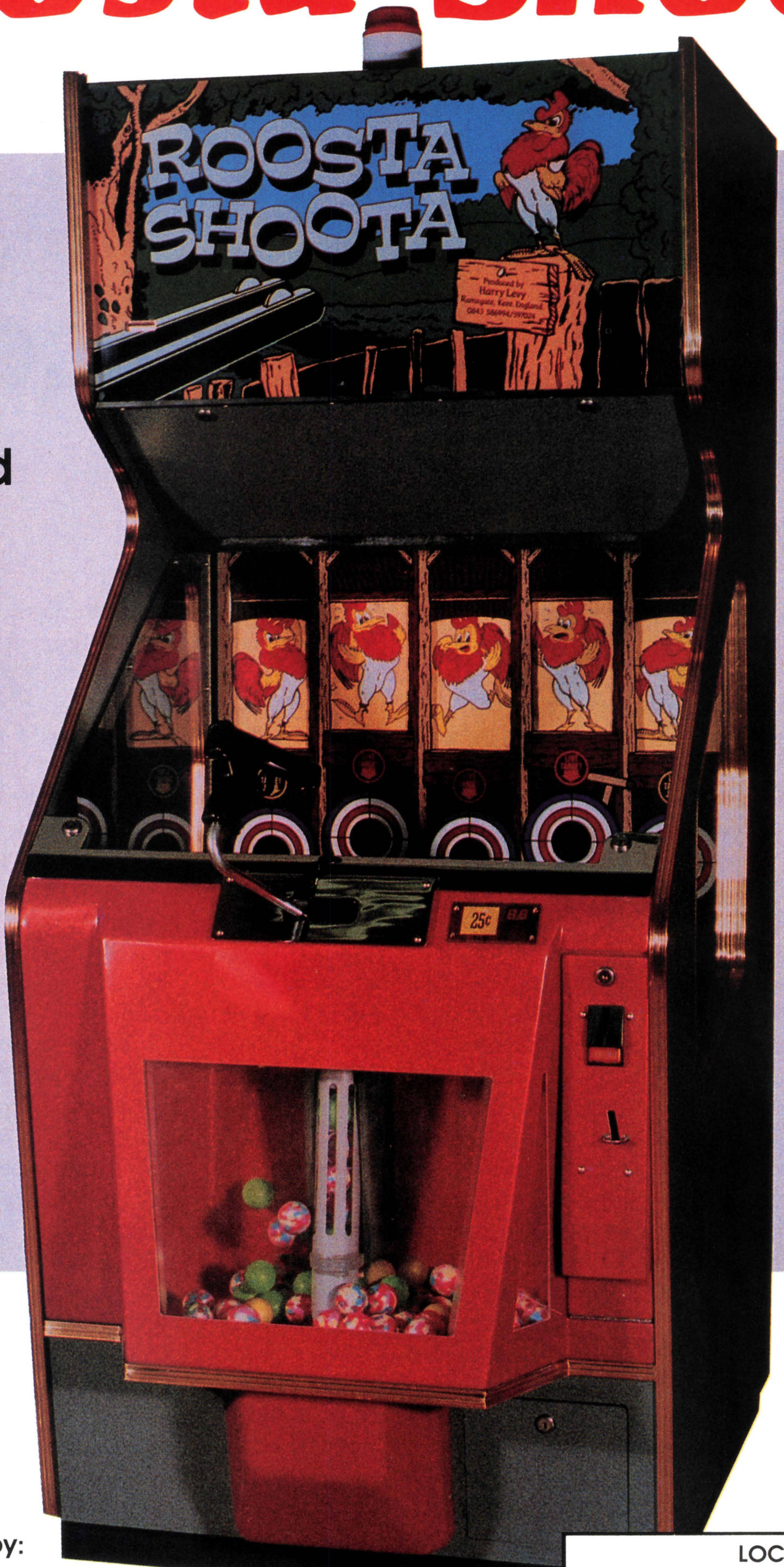
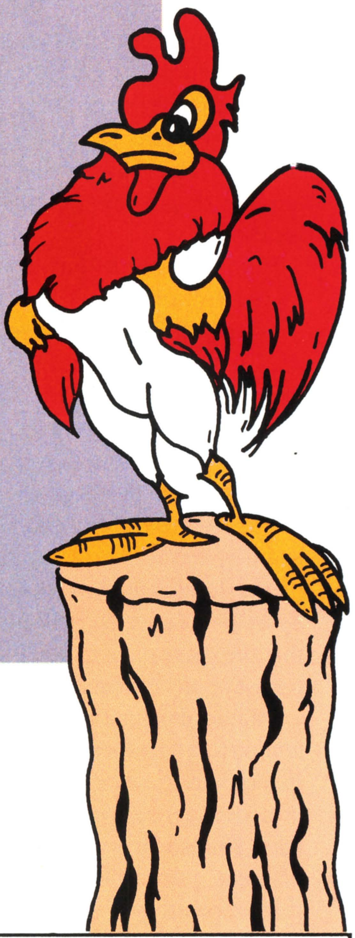


A NOVELTY SHOOTER THATS DIFFERENT



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Details can make a big difference

It is strange to find that manufacturers trying to sell their products in these days of intense competition and overproduction pay such little attention to details. Details that do not appear to be important on the surface can be most important and affect, to varying degrees, the amount of play the games receive on location.

Here are some of the details that need more attention:

1. **Coin chutes and coin detectors**. This is the most important part of any game since this is where it all begins. The coin intake should be placed as conveniently close to the player as possible, depending on the design of the game. There have been coin intakes, coin chutes, and slug rejectors so far removed from the player, located in a low spot and/or hidden by an overextended play panel or shelf, that the player has to be either a contortionist or an acrobat to play the game.

Cabinet designers seem to pay little attention to where the coin intake is located. It looks as if some manufacturers and designers dare players to find the coin intake. This is a far cry from the convenience of home games played in comfort with remote controls.

2. **Coin denomination signs**. For the most part these are always too small and difficult to see. Since most games are set on quarter play, this may not seem very significant. But for games that cost 50 cents, 75 cents, or $1 to play, use separate and permanent signs that cannot be scratched off.

3. **Control panels**. The size of these panels and the spacing of joysticks and buttons are a concern. One of the reasons why *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* is a big success is that it's a four-player game with an adequately-long control panel, and controls are spaced properly so that four players can play in comfort. Yet there have been three-player and four-player games where the players were so close together and uncomfortable that they couldn't play very long under such crowded conditions.

I remember over a year ago at a coin machine show when a manufacturer exhibited a four-player game that four sardines would have had a difficult time trying to play in comfort.

A suggestion to anyone who has anything to say about the design of a cabinet or game: if you are building a multi-player game, make control panels long enough and space controls properly to give players room to maneuver. Don't make them squeeze together; it takes all the fun out of competing.

For an unaccountable reason, either to save time or money, some kit manufacturers do not include side cabinet decals in their kit package. No matter how good the kit, the cabinet looks like an upright empty coffin! In this case, black is not beautiful.

All manufacturers and cabinet makers should realize that side decals are the billboards, signs, and attractions that catch the eye and draw the player to the game. While I realize that the sides of the game should not be as attractive as the front, there is no reason to avoid using the sides for advertising the game.

I have two other suggestions, these regarding flippers:

1. **Plunger springs**. A flipper manufacturer should never allow the plunger spring to be so strong and difficult to pull back that releasing the plunger hurts a player's fingers after two or three games. Believe me, this discourages play.

Adjust springs to the strength needed to make all the shots. If they are too strong you eliminate many players, especially the ladies.

2. **Mystery score**. A mystery score could be substituted for a match score. This mystery score would be separate from the regular score to beat, and would be a fluctuating score which appears on the backboard before the player shoots the first ball.

The mystery score would vary every game from very hard to very easy, giving all players (from expert to novice) an opportunity to win by their skill rather than the luck of the match play.

It's not unusual to see players win a free game on a match score, be unaware of it, and walk away from the game.

All these suggestions are made in the interest of improving games and retaining players. □

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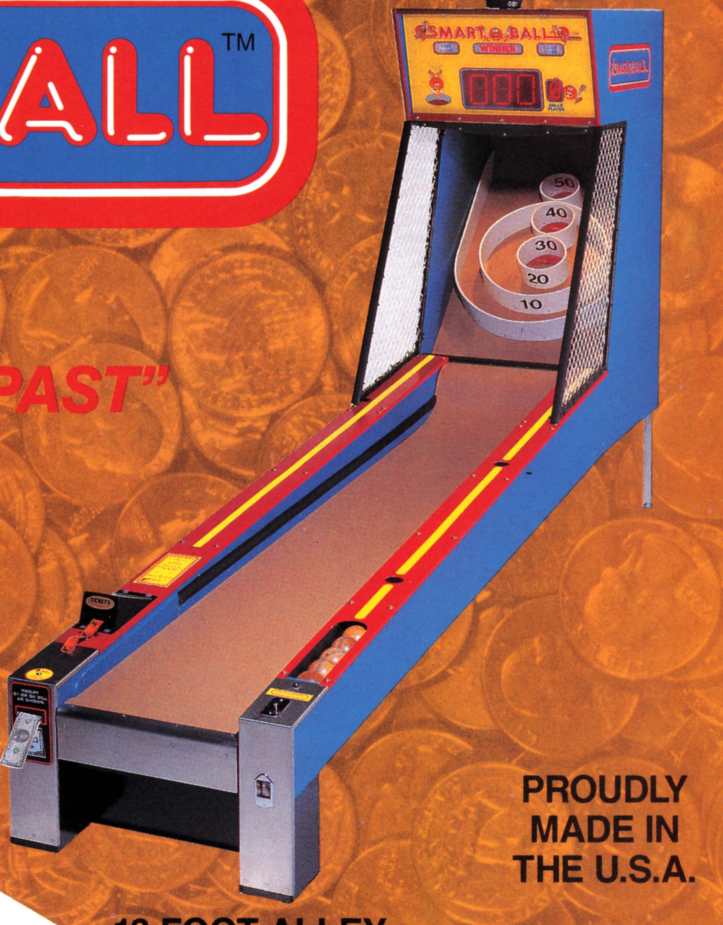

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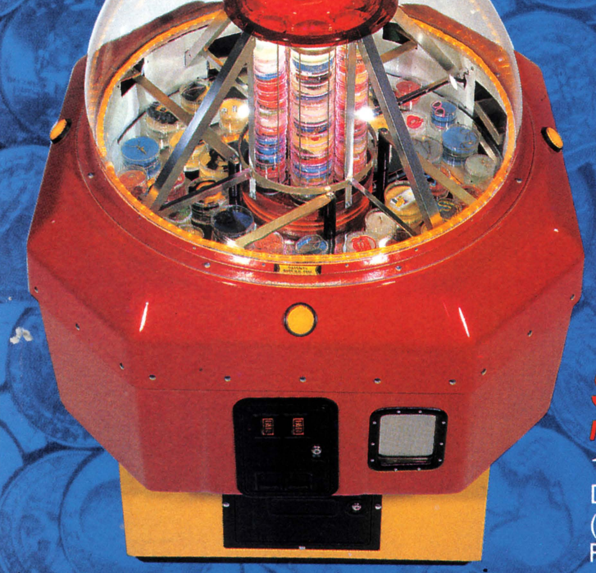

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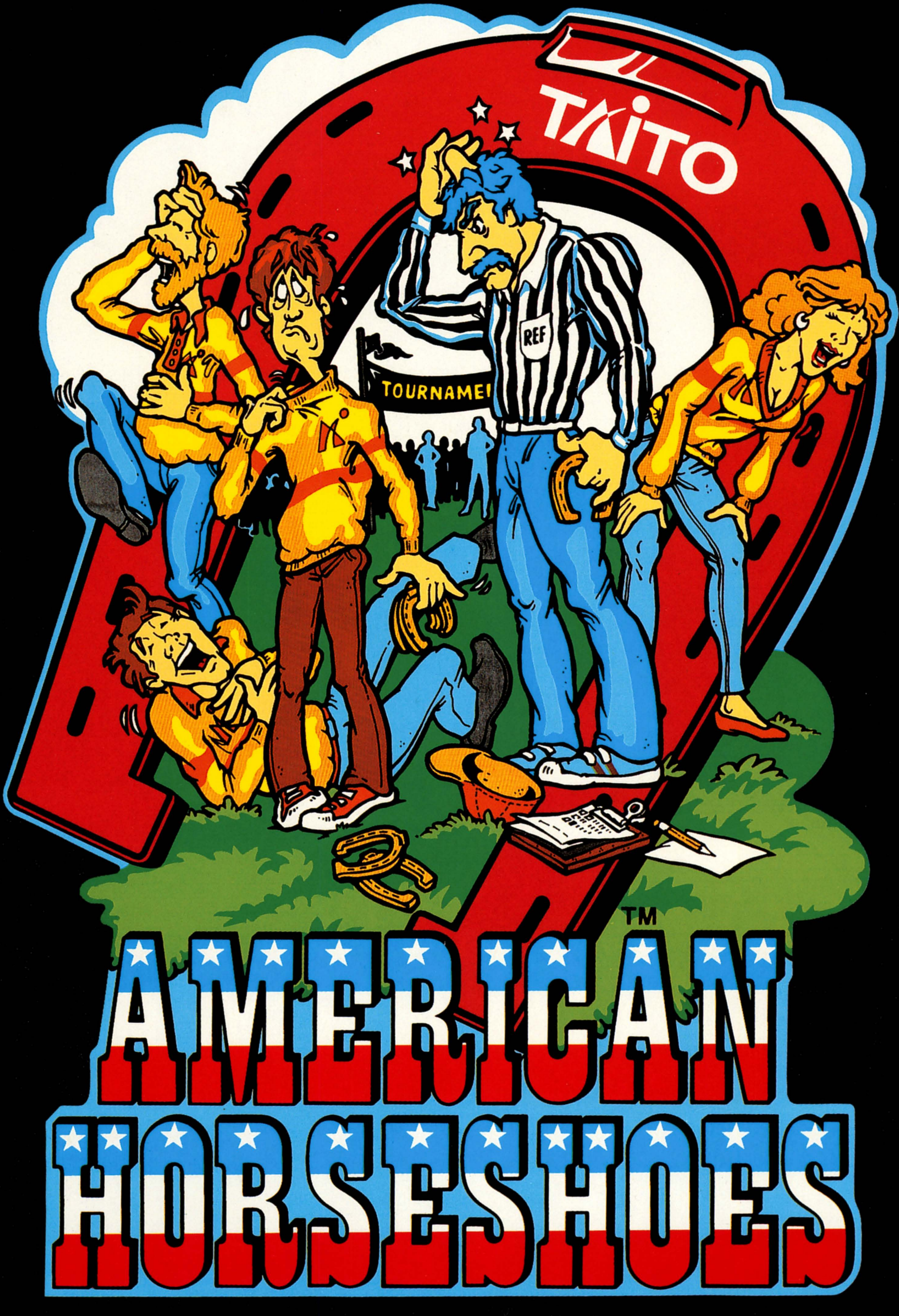
The architectural beauty of Mexico City greeted those attending the June trade show.

Successful show south of the border

A group of association members meet for a press conference.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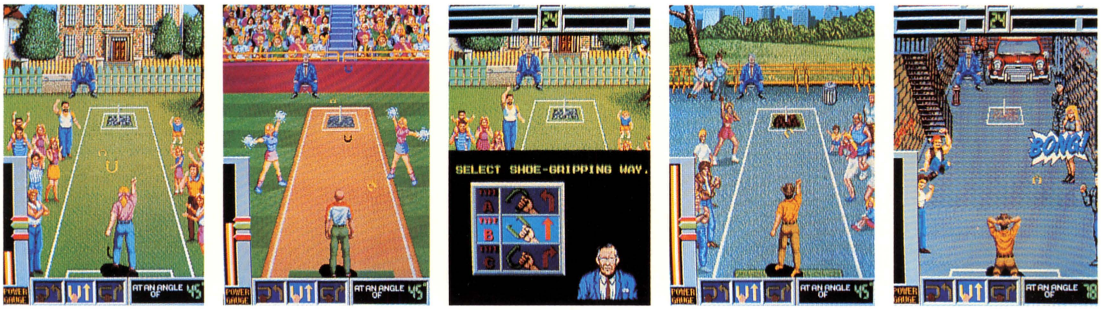

TAITO'S "AMERICAN HORSESHOES" CAN BE PLAYED BY ONE TO FOUR PLAYERS. EACH PLAYER CAN CHOOSE FROM ONE OF FOUR CHARACTERS. THERE ARE TWO PITCHES IN EACH INNING. PLAYERS MAY SELECT GRIP AND THROWING ANGLE PRIOR TO EACH PITCH. THE ROLLING OF THE TRACKBALL DETERMINES THE DISTANCE OF EACH PITCH.

SCORING

- **"RINGER"—3 POINTS. A HORSESHOE WHICH WRAPS AROUND THE STAKE.**
- **"LEANER"—2 POINTS. A HORSESHOE WHICH RESTS AGAINST THE STAKE.**
- **LANDING WITHIN THE STAKE AREA—1 POINT.**

AFTER EACH INNING THE SCORING IS SHOWN WITH AN OVERHEAD SHOT OF THE STAKE AREA. EACH PLAYER'S SCORE IS SHOWN THROUGHOUT THE GAME AT THE TOP OF THE SCREEN. AT THE END OF EACH THREE INNINGS THE PLAYERS MAY CONTINUE BY INSERTING ADDITIONAL CREDITS. UP TO NINE INNINGS CAN BE PLAYED PER GAME.

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The Federacion De Operadores, Ensambladores Y Fabricantes De Ma—quinas De Video En La Republica Mexicana, A.C. sponsored a trade show in Mexico City on June 6-9, drawing Mexicans from all over the country and some Americans interested in the market south of the border.

It should be pointed out that the coin-op industry in Mexico is not structured like it is in the United States. Many companies are manufacturers and distributors as well as operators. Almost all of them manufacture their own cabinets.

Although the border into Mexico was opened considerably by lower tariffs a year ago, the coin-op industry down there is light years away from that in the United States. However, it was evident at this show that the industry in Mexico is looking forward to positive change. But even the most optimistic aren't expecting a transformation overnight.

Laws are quite different in Mexico, allowing parallel and copied boards to be the norm rather than the exception. But operators throughout the show echoed each other's predictions of having an industry of only original boards. The inferior quality of the copies was named as a major reason to phase them off their routes.

The laws concerning copied and parallel boards may be changing in the not-so-distant future. Leading the way in convincing the government to crack down on copied boards is Nintendo. The association has joined the effort and is confident that the government will cooperate in making parallels and copies illegal. But until that time, the countries that supply the copies and parallels will be pushing their products in the country. In fact, many exhibited at the show.

The companies exhibiting and attending the recent show take great pride in their businesses. They admit that they are much more confident than they were a year ago. They have addressed the changes that must be made and are willing to work to make them a reality.

A tour through the city's arcades leaves you with the realization that it will take

Rowe's Joel Friedman (r) and Jerry Gordon (c) join a group of operators in the Rincon Musical booth.

At the Video Juegos Tragamonedas booth, (l-r): Yanet Delgado, Edith Santos, and Emma Santos.

CIUDAD
PlayChoice
mexe

At Mexel's booth, (standing, l-r): Gerardo Duran, Jacob Shemaria, Rene Aziz, Luis Padilla, Henry Fong, Jose Luis Garcia, and Danielle Jovanen. In front are Benny Wurm (l) and Al Stone.

time to make significant changes. In this city of 20 million people, the majority of arcades are very archaic when compared to those in the United States. There are exceptions, of course, and those that have quality locations are anxious to see changes.

Although the show was only for companies in Mexico, some American companies were represented. Some have already made deals; Nintendo, NSM, Rowe, Exidy, Leland, Taito, Williams, and Midway have appointed distributors in Mexico to handle their products. Some of these companies had representatives at the show.

Next month the American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) will host a show in Mexico City; only AAMA members may exhibit. One company from Mexico summed it up: "I hope that they are coming down here to scout out new distributors to handle product and to learn about our business. I will be going for that reason."

> ***"There is a desire for Americans to go through established Mexican companies to sell product in the country."***

Mexico is going through a period of growth similar to what the United States went through during the late '70s and early '80s. Right now there are so many old games being operated that it's clear the country could use some new games. Just as the United States experienced, there will probably be companies trying out the waters that will not be successful. Arcades have games that are in poor condition, but because there's not much choice, players support them. However, the coin-op industry in Mexico is adamant about not becoming a dumping ground for all the product Americans don't want. They expressed their desire for Americans to go through established Mexican companies to sell product in the country.

One company representative said that he had approached American companies about representing them but was never

Mexican operators Estebau Juarez Gutierrez and Olaf Jaurez Gutierrez with Hollywood's Ron Clapper and Betson's Robert Betti.

(L-r): Mark Haim of Belam, Mike Kessler and Ernesto Felix-Diaz of Difadi, and Alex Perner of Belam.

Al Stone of Nintendo (l) and Jacob Shemaria of Mexel (r) flank operator Alejandro Telle Abaroa of Fiesta Carrusel.

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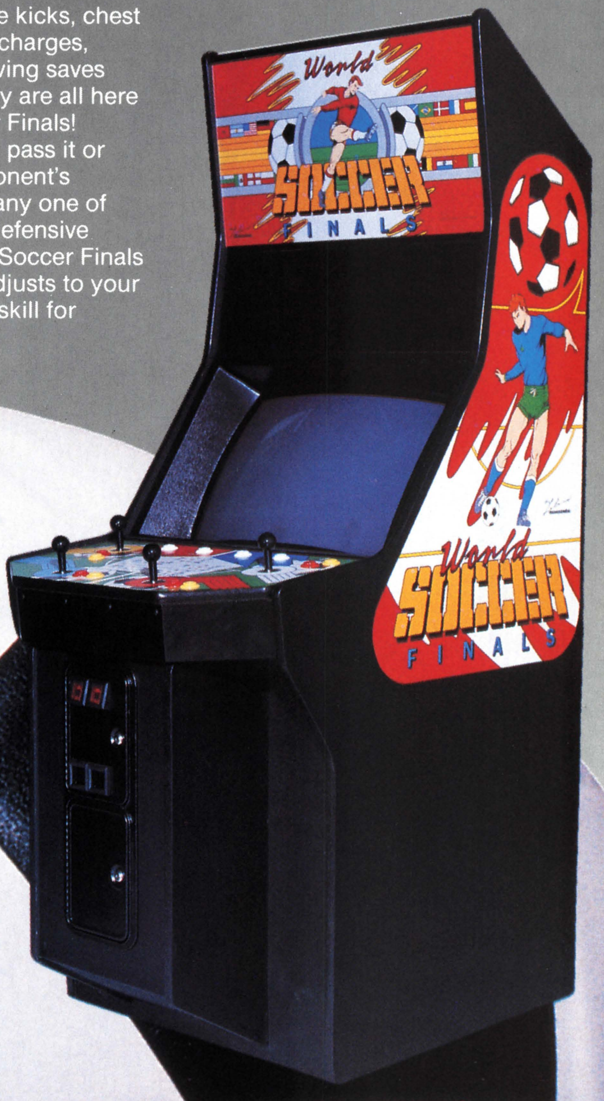

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taken seriously. Now that the economy is better and Mexican companies are working towards higher quality of professionalism, the Americans think they can come right in and take over. Many are hoping that the show in a couple of weeks will educate Americans on the situation in Mexico, in addition to developing a solid working relationship between the two countries.

Miquel Flores, president of the Mexican association, has expressed his desire for a group of his members to have a meeting with AAMA members to discuss their mutual problems. ☐

Larry Berke of Jaleco with Monica Felix-Diaz of Difadi.

Quadalupe Trejo de Murillo and her son Mequel of HMB in their booth.

(L-r): John Blouin of James Industries, Jacob Shemaria and Henry Fong of Mexel, and Carlos Colin of James Industries.

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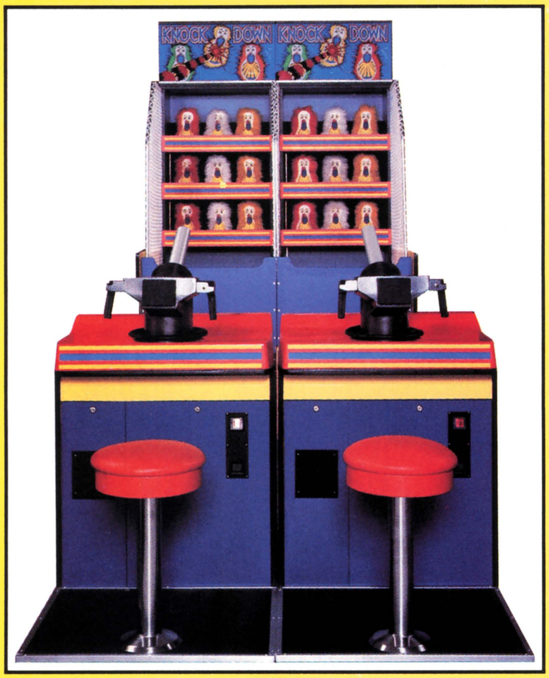

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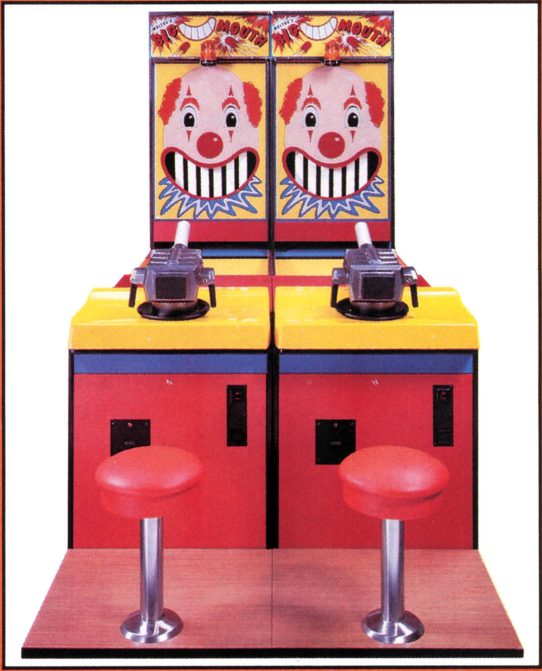

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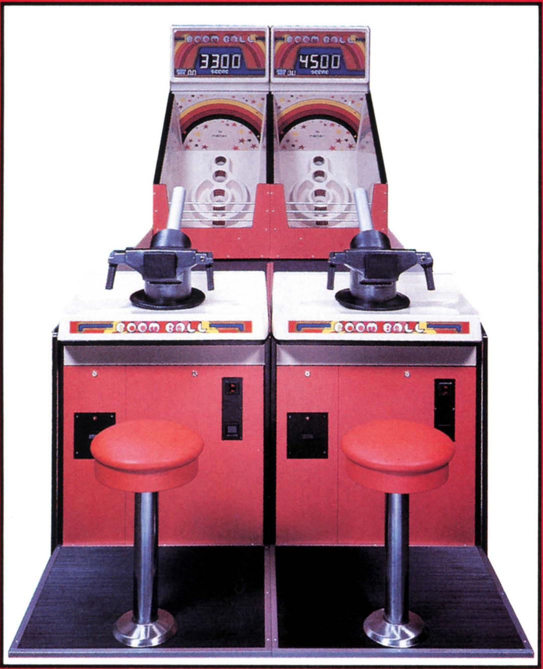

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ShowBiz hosts annual franchise meeting

ShowBiz Pizza Time Inc. franchisees gathered at the Hyatt Regency New Orleans on May 8-9 for an annual meeting that included business sessions and 100 exhibit booths featuring games and food products.

The aroma of fresh-cooked pizza (of every variety possible) filled the exhibit hall as franchisees had an opportunity to sample the new pizza dough introduced by ShowBiz. Judging by the return visits to the pizza booth, the dough proved to be a resounding success.

ShowBiz currently has 126 franchise units (managed by 77 franchisees) in the United States and abroad, plus 133 company-owned stores. The newest franchise location is in Richmond, Va., headed by Mike Hilton of Mid-South Food Management. The newest company-owned store is located in Rancho Cuca Monga, Calif.

According to Gene Cramm, vice president and director of purchasing and game operations, "This meeting is designed to show franchisees the latest and greatest. All corporately approved vendors are represented. Franchisees have come from all over the United States, Canada, Guatemala, and Hong Kong."

Coin-op exhibitors included Moss Distributing of Des Moines, Iowa; Atlas Distributing of Chicago; and Greater Southern Distributing of Atlanta.

Game manufacturers were well-represented, with equipment shown from Meltec, Doyle & Assoc., Fabtek, Skee-Ball, Konami, Capcom, Bromley Inc., Taito, Premier, Atari, Bob's Space Racers, Data East, Bay Tek, Fab Electronics, Lazer Tron, Kiddie Rides USA, and Amutech Kiddie Rides of London, England. Suppliers such as Oriental Trading Co. and National Ticket Co. were also present.

Each year this event grows, with more approved vendors being invited to participate. ShowBiz has selected Orlando, Fla., as the 1991 site of this happy occasion, which brings franchisees together with home office personnel for an enjoyable and informative exchange. ☐

ShowBiz staffers, (l-r): Bob West (voice of Jasper and Pasqually), Cheryl Cleavenger (voice of Helen), and Steve White (script writer and producer).

NATIONAL TICKET COMPANY
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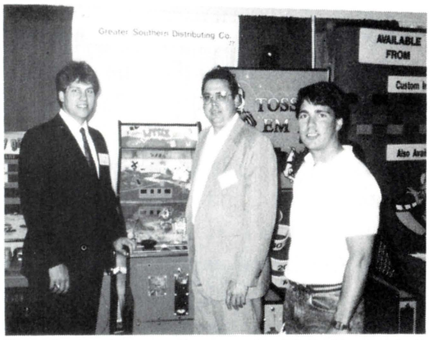
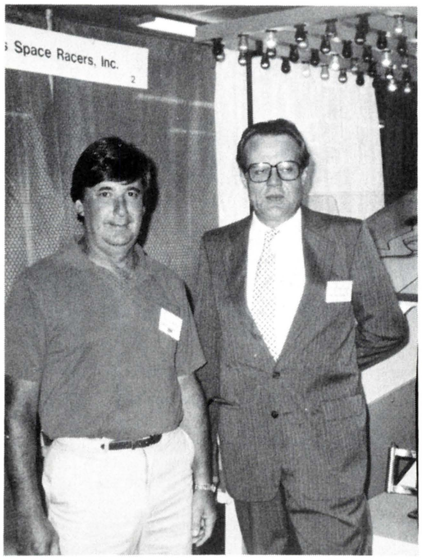
Bill Alter of National Ticket Co. welcomes Lisa Anderson of Restaurant Investors in Honolulu.


Greater Southern Distributing Co.
AVAILABLE FROM

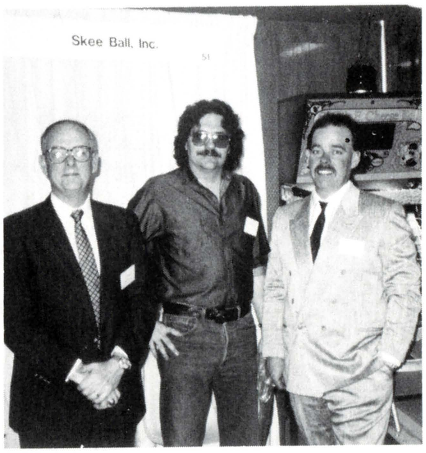
Marty Smith of Greater Southern (l) with Ed Morris (c) of McBiz Corp. in Topeka, Kan., and Brian Maginnis of Computerized Entertainment Concepts in Portland, Ore.

At the Doyle booth, (l-r): Marty Giardina, ShowBiz vice president of franchising, Skip and Sondra Doyle, and Mike and Patti Hilton of Mid-South Food Management in Richmond, Va.


Space Racers, Inc.

Larry Caudle of Anchorage, Alaska, joins Jerry Weiman of Bob's Space Racers by *Roll-A-Ball* and *Water Race*.

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles lovers, (l-r): Teresa Criado and Mariel and Aaron Rubin of P & H Co. in Pompano Beach, Fla., with Nancy Hardt of Moss Distributing.


Skee Ball, Inc.

Joe Sladek (l) and Alec Sprouse (r) of Skee-Ball meet with Glen Saville of Momentum Inc. in Cleveland.

Franchisees enjoy playing *Lunar Golf*, the latest game from Meltec.

By Atari's *Gumball Rally*, back row (l-r): Glenn McNamara of Atari, Gene Cramm of ShowBiz, Dick Frank (president) of ShowBiz, and John Hill of Sega. Kneeling are Ed Pelligrini (l) of Atlas Distributing and Terry Moss of Moss Distributing.

The unsung heroes of coin-op

"It has often been said that the unsung heroes of this industry are the service technicians. That statement is more valid now than ever before. The challenges facing today's technicians are far greater than the challenges faced by their predecessors. Space age technology and rapid changes in the state of the art have enabled manufacturers to produce equipment with more play appeal and earning power than ever before," said Ralph Lally in his editorial in Play Meter's July 1980 issue.

Of course, he was referring to the fact that the coin-op industry was rapidly approaching the video boom years. We already had *Space Invaders* and *Asteroids* and were on the brink of *Pac-Man*. Technicians had been confronted only five years before with the advent of solid-state pinball technology. At no other time in coin-op history would technicians be forced to learn so much in such a short period of time.

Art Seglin was Play Meter's "Coinman of the Month" 10 years ago. Art was teaching a two-year course in vending machine repair and was a featured speaker at the first AOE show, held just three months previously. Art explained that it was vital for operators to have skilled service personnel. "It's not a new problem; we've always had a shortage of skilled personnel. It's just become more apparent in the past couple of years as the equipment has changed," he noted.

Zac Oliver was Play Meter's technical writer. He observed that "at times we lag behind, technically speaking. At times we advance too fast, creating a gap among technical personnel. This disrupts the overall flow and sets the industry in a frenzy to catch up." He predicted that for pinball to survive, it would not only have to keep its play appeal but also change to a more reliable configuration.

Industry news included the following: state association leaders met in Ohio to discuss ways to make their organizations more responsive to operator needs; the copyright battles were continuing to determine what the fee would be for the next 10 years; George Miller, the first president and executive director of AMOA, passed away; United Artists Theatre Amusements, a new division of United Artists Theatre Circuit, opened up the newest in its "Electronic Experience" centers; Loewen-America announced 12 new distributors for NSM in the United States; and Poland Manufacturing moved into larger quarters to meet the increased needs of its pool table service devices.

Also, Rock-Ola expanded into Tennessee and Arkansas; Gottlieb president Judd Weinberg left to become a senior consultant to the management of Columbia Pictures, the company's parent company; Alvin J. Gottlieb became the chairman of the board and Robert Bloom assumed the post of president at Gottlieb; the U.S. Mint was reporting a shortage of pennies; and Lester Rieck retired from Rock-Ola.

Play Meter's Equipment Poll still featured the top 20 pinballs and the top 10 videos. The top pinballs 10 years ago were *Gorgar, Silverball Mania, Firepower, Flash, Space Invaders, Galaxy, Laser Ball, Stellar Wars, Meteor, Time Warp, Spiderman, Kiss, Superman, Future Spa, Big Game, Playboy, Sharpshooter, Sea Witch, Genie,* and *Paragon*. An interesting note: six of the top 10 pinballs were Williams, two were Bally, and two were Stern. Of the other 10 games in the top 20, two were Gottlieb, one was Atari, two were Stern, four were Bally, and one was Game Plan.

The top 10 videos in July 1980 were *Space Invaders* and *Galaxians* from Midway, *Asteroids, Football,* and *Sprint II* from Atari, *Tailgunner* and *Space Wars* from Cinematronics, *Monaco GP* and *Head On* from Gremlin, and *Sea Wolf* from Midway.

Play Meter's "Hot Stuff" music chart included these top 10 hits: "The Biggest Part of Me," "It's Still Rock n' Roll To Me," "We Live For Love," "Little Jeannie," "Let Me Love You Tonight," "Cars," "Brass in Pocket (I'm Special)," "Funky Town," "She's Out Of My Life," and "Hurts So Bad." ☐

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Joining Atari in paradise

Atari Games will never be accused of selecting hum-drum venues for its annual distributor meeting. The company utilized the tropical backdrop of Maui, Hawaii, for its 1990 affair, held at the Four Seasons Hotel on May 6-10.

Ever hospitable, Atari had a full slate of social activities planned for its distributors. The "Maui Wowie Road Rally" was made up of teams with an express mission: find a host of items scattered across the island, a scavenger hunt on wheels. Other highlights included golf and tennis tournaments, a snorkel cruise, a dinner cruise, cocktail parties, and a Hawaiian barbecue—featuring a Hawaiian shirt contest with the loudest, most gaudy threads imaginable. (That was the point!)

Of course, business was the *real* reason everyone showed up. Atari unveiled its three latest games at the business meeting: *Thunder Jaws, Hydra,* and *Gumball Rally*.

Thunder Jaws is a one- or two-player kit compatible with 19- and 25-inch monitors. This fighting game finds players on a mission to save the Earth from the evil Madam Q and her faithful army.

Hydra is a dedicated game that comes in a mini-upright cabinet. (It will be released in dedicated form initially and as a kit down the road.) Housed in a 19-inch monitor, *Hydra* asks players to complete nine government missions aboard a "Hydracraft" vessel.

While speeding down waterways, the player must engage in shoot-outs with enemy forces, who are in boats, jet skis, hovercraft, halftracks, zeppelins, and choppers. Completing the final mission forces "bad guy" Shadow to reveal his identity. This all takes place amid bright, digitized landscapes.

Atari is banking on *Gumball Rally* to appeal to young children. This non-video piece features a miniature toy car that makes its way around the track, with the goal of amassing as many points as possible before running out of "fuel." The points, obtained by reaching a series of checkpoints, can be turned in for redemption tickets (the game comes with a ticket option). ☐

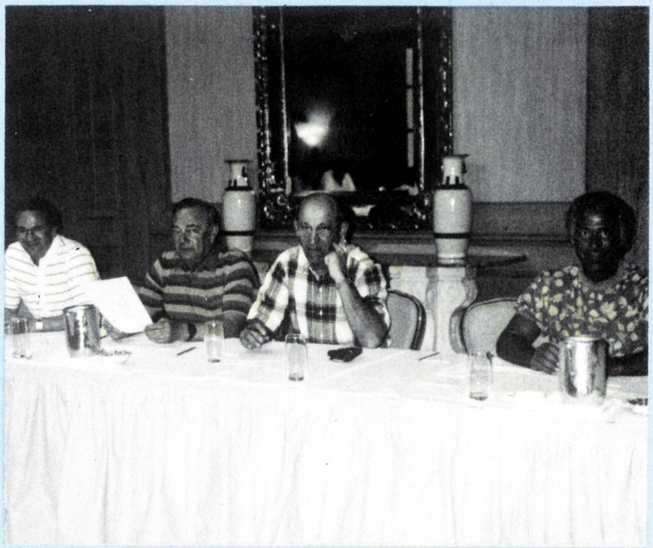
From left: Bert Betti of Betson Enterprises, John Lotz of Betson Pacific, Rick Kirby of New England Coin-Op, and Bill Kraft of Shaffer Distributing.

Mark Chan of General Coin tries his hand at *Thunder Jaws*. Looking on, left to right, are Rick Kirby of New England Coin-Op, Nick DiSebastiano of State Sales, and Morris Piha of Greater Southern.

Don and Alice Waters of Mountain Coin pose with the winning shirts in the Hawaiian Shirt Contest. Mr. Nakajima thought they were pretty funny, too!

From left: Jerry Marcus of Atlas Distributing, Rubin Franco of Franco Distributing, and Atari's Jim Newlander.

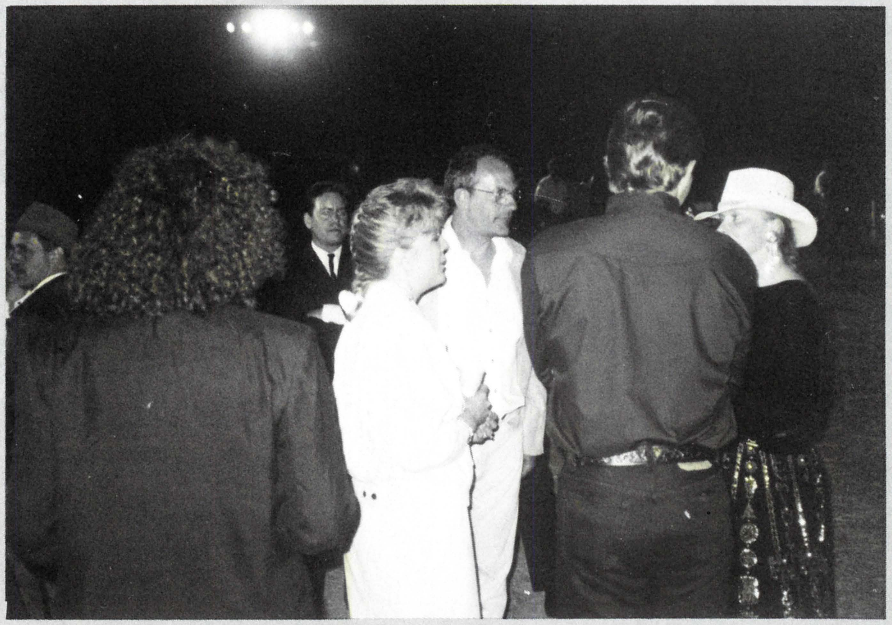
David Capilouto (l) and Dave Gilfor (r) sample *Hydra*.



From left: Jay Waldman of Kentucky Coin, Joel Kleiman of Pioneer Sales, Rubin Franco of Franco Distributing, and Ira Bettelman of C.A. Robinson.

Data East goes Back to the Future

The red light was on outside of this Old Western bordello.



Christopher Lloyd (c), who plays "Doc" in the *Back to the Future* trilogy, chats with friends.

The Data East crew, (l-r): Kristin Avena, Jolly Backer, Joe Keenan, Gary Stern, Joe Kaminkow, and Pete Gustafson.

The literary and musical communities were represented at the party. That's Lou Perfidio of Vending Times on the right with ZZ Top guitarist Billy Gibbons.

Data East Pinball knows that trade shows aren't the only places to unveil new product. The company introduced its latest pinball, *Back to the Future: The Pinball*, on May 21 at Universal Studios in Los Angeles.

The timing couldn't have been better, for this was also the day Universal Studios staged the U.S. premiere of the movie *Back to the Future Part III*. Following the screening, about 1,500 people—including celebrities and California distributors—kicked up their heels at a Western-themed party. It was held at a four-acre Western set on Universal's back lot.

Among those in attendance from the movie were Steven Spielberg, Christopher Lloyd, Lea Thompson, Mary Steenburgen, and Thomas F. Wilson. (Michael J. Fox was filming a movie in New York City.) Other celebrities included Goldie Hawn, Kurt Russell, Sally Field, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Maria Shriver, Martin Short, Gary Bussey, Shelley Duvall, Bobcat Goldthwait, and members of the rock band ZZ Top (who made a cameo appearance in the film). The event was a fund-raiser for the Los Angeles Westside Children's Center.

It wasn't hard for attendees to envision standing in the center of an Old Western town. The streets were covered with tumbleweeds and lined with hitching posts. Bad guys clamored to get out of jail, while ladies of the evening stood outside their place of business, inviting love-starved gentlemen inside. There were also shooting galleries, blacksmith demonstrations, casinos, live Western bands and dancing, old-fashioned ''test-your-strength'' machines, and food. Make that *plenty* of food: barbecued chicken and ribs, chili, fajitas, quesidillas, pies, cobbler, and assorted beverages to wash it all down.

Oh yes, there were pinball machines in the midst of this time warp. Data East Pinball set up a handful of *BTF*s in a makeshift game arcade. Executive vice president/general manager Gary Stern has high hopes for the pin, which was expected to be ready for the operating community in mid- to late June.

''We are strong believers in licensing, and it also helps to time it right,'' he said. ''It worked for Bally years ago and for us recently with *ABC Monday Night Football*. *Back to the Future II*, which did $300 million in the United States and $150 million in the export market, came out on videocassette in late May. This latest sequel opened nationwide during the Memorial Day weekend, and it's expected to do even better at the box office. Europe will get the movie in July, so we've come out with a great product at the best possible time.''

Stern says the game has ''revolutionary'' features, technologically speaking, that haven't been seen on previous pinball machines.

''We've base-boarded the cabinet, which gives us great sound,'' he said. ''There's a new latch, with no headbolts. The operator no longer has to open the head to set the game up. We have service lights on the front to tell operators when to do certain types of service. There are all kinds of other things in this respect that will make handling the game much easier.

''Also, the theme fits the game. We're going after a broad market, not just the high-powered arcade player—though there are some playfield features for him. As far as earnings are concerned, I expect *BTF* to do even better than *Phantom of the Opera*.'' □

Though he forgot his Western attire, former Saturday Night Live star Martin Short wasn't adverse to shaking a leg.

A true Western-themed party has to have a C&W band!

Valerie Cognevich

Rich Babich

Rich Babich did not inherit a family business. He did not work weekends and summers for a father who would eventually turn the business over to him. Rich started his operating company, Automated Amusements, and his distributing company, Colorado Game Exchange, from scratch to form one of the most respected organizations in the industry.

His coin-op career began in the early '70s. Rich was working for an operator before he ventured out on his own. Although he is most noted for distributing, Rich is also an operator and has some manufacturing experience. His wife Bev works along with him in the business; the couple has two sons. When we were looking for answers about distributors in the United States, we chose Rich because of his knowledge and diverse background.

Why don't you start at the beginning of your industry career?

I began working at Funway Freeway Arcade in Columbus, Ohio. They had aspirations of becoming a national chain of arcades. I was transferred to Denver with the company in 1975, when they started opening their western division. The arcade chain was eventually sold to Six Flags, which later sold to Bally's Aladdin's Castle. A little before they sold out in January 1977, I put a few games out on location and took a job outside of the industry. It was doing production scheduling work at a factory.

I did the collection and service calls for my route before 7 a.m. and after 5 p.m. It made for some long days and weekends. It got to the point where it was too much for me to run by myself while holding another job. I figured out that I could hire a service man for less money than I was making as production manager, so I hired my first employee.

When the route finally totaled about 300 pieces I decided that it was time to leave my production job and concentrate on my operation.

What was the name of your company?

Automated Amusements. It is still in operation today.

How did you get into distributing?

As the route was growing, I began to feel that the local distributors were not doing a very good job of servicing their customers. I started offering service to other operators. From there I started selling games off of my route to the same operators I was doing service for. I found that there was a market for reconditioned

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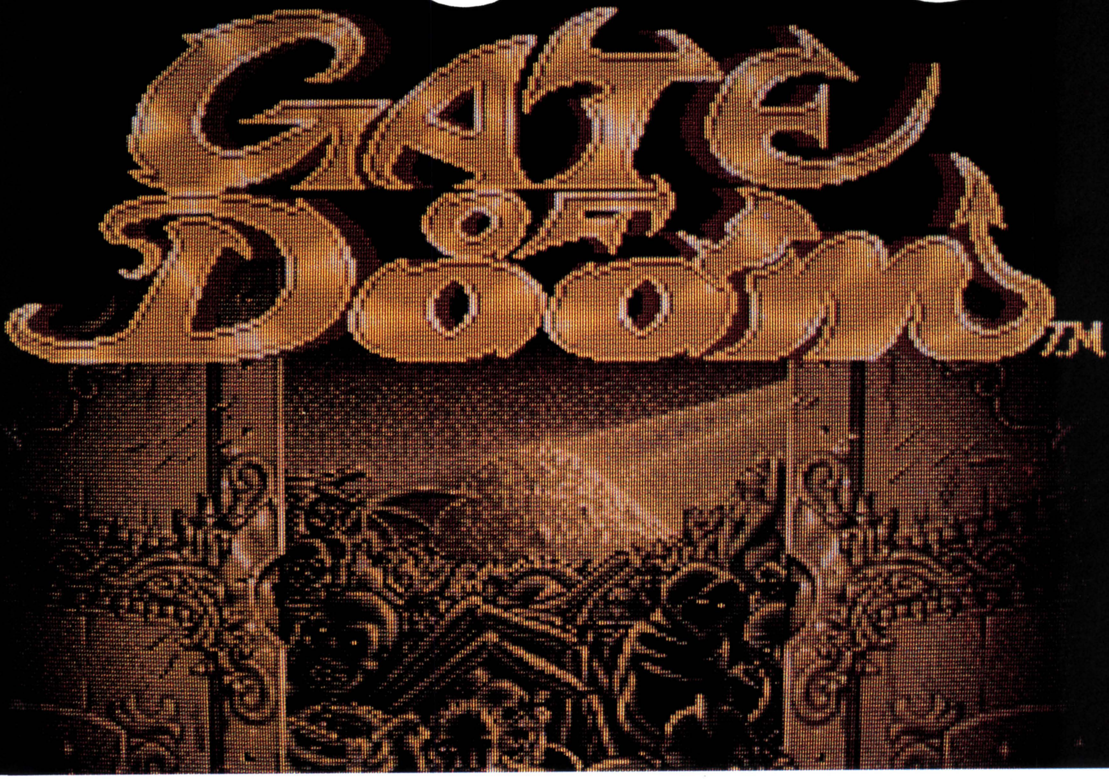
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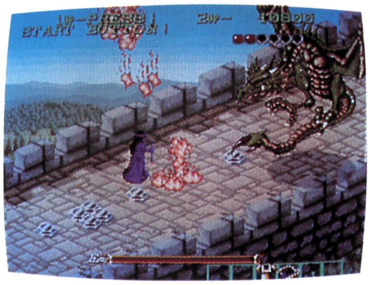
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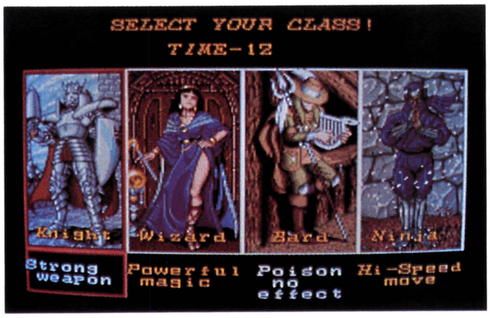
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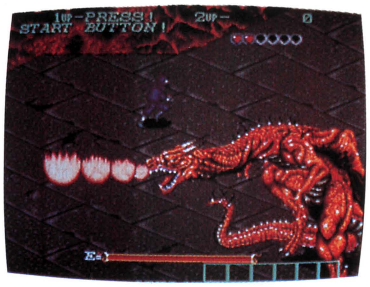
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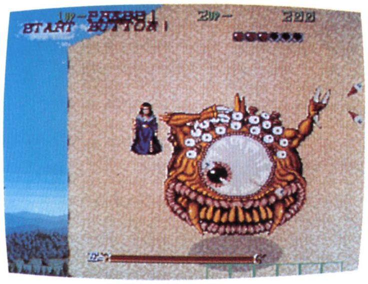
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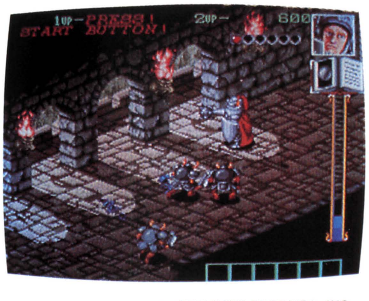
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used equipment. All this time I became more and more convinced that the distributors were not doing a proper job.

Were you considered a jobber back then?

I later became a jobber. A jobber is a guy that buys new equipment from factory-authorized distributors with the express purpose of reselling it at a profit. I got into it because I was taking care of my customers by providing a better service department than the distributor could offer and selling used equipment to them. They wanted to buy new equipment from me. Frankly, had I realized how hard it is to run a first-class distributorship I never would have done it!

When did you start Colorado Game Exchange?

We started it as the distributing end of our business in the early '80s. We were not associated with the other Game Exchanges in Columbus and Atlanta in terms of ownership, but we were very close friends. We combined our resources to advertise our products. We bought large quantities of distressed equipment and would advertise it jointly.

When did you become a factory-authorized distributor?

There are jobbers and there are distributors. Somehow jobbers acquired a negative connotation along the way. It wasn't always the case. But most jobbers during the video boom did not have a service department or a parts department. They bought equipment at just over factory cost and resold it. I don't think we were ever really jobbers in the sense that we always had a service department and a large parts inventory.

Our first product line was Atari, when Shane Breaks first came back from Europe about 1985. Atari had just introduced its System I and System II. The company was not represented in Colorado at all, but it was looking for someone aggressive enough to represent the line.

How long did it take to get the other lines?

They gradually followed one at a time. I remember trucking to the trade shows every spring and fall to make my sales pitch to the manufacturers. I would pick up maybe one more line. Finally, today, I represent virtually all of the major lines.

What are your feelings about distributors who operate?

I operate, but I don't hide it. Some distributors don't like to admit it. I tell my customers two very important things. I was an operator first, and I will provide the proper level of service support. I will not do anything to jeopardize my customer base. My operator customers must be healthy. I have set ground rules for my route management; they know which locations they are allowed to take and which ones are off limits. It pretty much restricts us from unfair competition.

How much pressure do distributors get from manufacturers to commit to product?

There is an enormous amount of pressure. Our route absorbs a very healthy chunk of the mediocre equipment that my customers don't want to buy. My customers can pick and choose what they want to buy. As a distributor, we are forced to take a certain number of games. We have to at least sample each game.

Are the manufacturers pretty reasonable when it comes to how many games they expect you to buy?

Some are reasonable about how many we buy and some aren't. Every factory expects their distributors to at least sample every game. I think they have the right to expect that. Some will say we have to take a certain number of games or they will make business decisions that might not be in our best interest. I think distribution has to respond to that. Operators, distributors, and manufacturers all have their businesses to run. Everyone has to do what they have to do.

> ***"I began to feel that the local distributors were not doing a very good job of servicing their customers."***

Have you ever had operators complain about you operating?

I have heard operators complain that distributors can get equipment faster or cheaper. I don't know that either of those statements is true. We take care of our customers on a priority basis. When *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* came out, my customers got the game before my route. Maybe we do buy a little cheaper, but if you talk with distributors they'll tell you the overhead for running their businesses is about 10 percent of gross sales.

How do you handle service situations between your route and your customers?

It has been a conflict because my operator customers get priority over the route. Then my route manager gripes at me. That may be kind of a flip answer but it is very true. It's also not unusual for me to take a game board off of my floor for a customer. If a customer comes in with a bad board from a game he just bought and asks me to give him the board out of a game on my showroom floor, I'll usually do it. However, my managers are less likely to go through the hassle of asking me to break a rule by giving them the board off the floor.

As a distributor, what do you think about the product coming out right now?

I think there is much too much product being introduced. I have to wonder whether the testing programs that factories use are thorough. Judging by some of the games they've had, I don't think the Japanese companies really understand our market.

Have you seen situations where games don't test well and therefore are not produced?

We do see some of that. I think to its credit, Bally/Midway field tested *Trog* and thought it was ready to be released. However, Bally hasn't released it yet because the company wasn't happy with the end result. Bally decided not to release the game until it had made changes necessary for our market.

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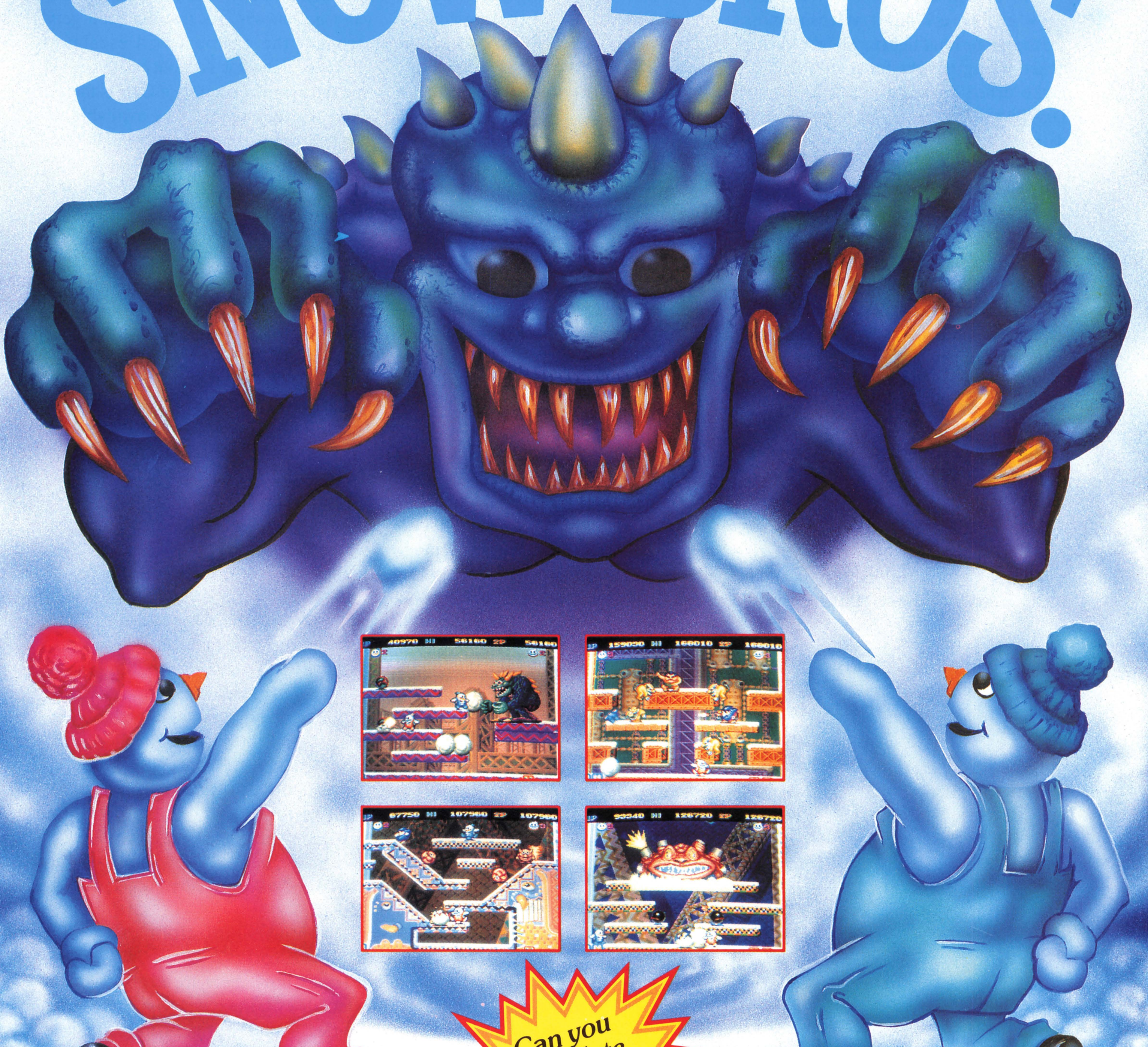
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After you have been pressured to take mediocre games, how fair are the manufacturers when a really hot game comes out?

Some are fair and some aren't. It's funny; when there is a big hit, you can almost see the phone lines light up and the airline tickets being bought for distributors to make offers to get product up front. Distributorships are trying to get the first deliveries.

I think Konami, which most recently had the biggest hit the industry has seen for a long time, did a very credible job with *TMNT*. The company was very up front with what was going on. They were as frustrated as we were that the market was not getting the number of games it demanded. But Konami was always honest and that really helped us. Whether it was good news or bad news we could take it; it's the incorrect information that we can't handle.

Have you seen a trend of larger operators buying up smaller routes?

Not so much in my part of the country, but I have seen it in others. I think that it is a fairly normal process for the strong to absorb the weak. In some cases the strong become a little lackadaisical with service or product. Then a small guy can come along and offer better service. My route got built that way. I came in and offered service that was not being offered by bigger companies. My distributorship got strong because others were not doing the job that was necessary.

What do you think will happen with 45s?

I think that CDs have been a big advantage in the jukebox industry. The customer perceives it as a much better value because of the sound quality. We are replacing our vinyl boxes with CDs at the rate of one a month. It will take us about five or six years to replace all of our boxes. However, we are now about a year-and-a-half into this program, and I would like to speed up the process.

Do you foresee the cost of CDs going down?

I think they will. That's been the trend in this industry. I also think we will see more and better compilation discs. I use some with oldies and like them. But I don't know that they would work with the current songs. Consumers are used to buying albums and knowing where certain cuts are on that album. They wouldn't know where to look on a compilation disc.

Rich with sons J.J. and Chi.

Have you had any difficulties getting 45s?

I have some customers on my route who are very unhappy with me over songs I can't get on 45s. As that situation gets stronger the problem will escalate. However, I think it's a moot point. I think that the perceived value of CDs is there. Even if every record was available in vinyl, 10 years from now you wouldn't see many 45 jukeboxes.

Have you seen a trend toward redemption?

Absolutely. Redemption is going to be big in this business and I'm trying to learn and understand it. But then I'm still learning about video games! That's one of the beauties of our industry — we are learning all the time. Redemption is a big wave coming for our industry.

Operators need advice when something new like redemption comes along. What kind of advice do you give?

If you are going to do redemption, do it right. A poorly set-up redemption center, where there is no perceived value to the items the player is redeeming his tickets for, will not work. If you only have low-end stuff it will not be successful. The redemption market is offering a perceived value to the player. When he walks up to *Skee-Ball* or any redemption piece and puts his money in, part of the value he expects to get is the tickets. Another part is the entertainment value of the game.

Are you using redemption on your route?

We are using some. It is still a small percentage, but I think it will expand. We use *Skee-Ball*, basketballs, and knockdowns.

Do most distributors sell within their territories?

I don't think there are any distributors who stick 100 percent within their territories. I am referring mainly to music and games. It is a different story with vending. Vending takes more service and support, so operators tend to stick within the area. Although we have just been a vending distributor for a year, I can see that the vending business is much more stable. It seems that you can almost predict what you will sell in vending. In the amusement business we are product-driven. We are dependent on the factories for what they release.

What made you decide to get into vending?

I don't like being bored! When things are going pretty smooth, I start looking for ways to expand. I felt that it was important to have a strong music line and a strong vending line. With vending we have many new customers. It is not the same ones that buy music and games.

How do you feel about the Japanese influence in the coin-op business?

The Japanese are very aggressive businessmen. They are very hard-working and expend a lot of energy developing hardware and software. But I would say that most of the Japanese companies do not understand our market.

What will help them understand it?

I think they have to come live it. Japan is very different from the United States.

Can you foresee factories selling direct to operators?

I can tie that into one of your earlier questions about distributors who sell out of their territories. Factories selling direct will have as many problems as distributors selling out of their territories. It's hard enough for a distributor to make financing decisions on a guy he has simply met and had dinner with.

Asking me to make a credit evaluation on somebody who is thousands of miles away, that I can't see person to person, would be difficult. I would have to ask how the factories would collect their money. Also, selling parts and providing service would be next to impossible.

We are a very people-oriented business. History shows our success is based on relationships the operator has with the distributor and the relationship the distributor has with the manufacturer.

How loyal are operators to their distributors?

There are two groups of operators--those that will sell out their distributor for a $5 bill and those that are incredibly loyal. In my business, I would like to think that I have been honest enough and given proper advice so that we have a special kind of relationship--a trusting relationship. I am partners with my customers. My favorite customer buys one game from me a month. He may not be my biggest customer, but he is a loyal customer.

> ***"I operate, but I don't hide it. Some distributors don't like to admit it."***

You have bought some games that you realize are not so hot, out of a commitment to the manufacturer. A loyal customer comes in to buy one of those. How do you advise him?

We have a lot of fights with manufacturers over this! There are different kinds of product. There's the hot product that everyone wants; selling them is order taking.

There is the bad product that no one wants; much of that ends up on my own route. Then there is product that at the right price and in the right location will show the operator a fair return on investment.

As a distributor if I give bad advice, eventually I will erode my customer base. Since we are partners with our operator customers, we must be as honest as possible. But yes, it can be a fine line at times, knowing the manufacturer is on our backs to sell. But my customer comes first.

Do you take trade-ins?

I think that is part of a distributor's job. I just ask my customers not to expect me to take back equipment for more than its value. I think that part of a distributor's job is to act as a warehouse for his customers. An operator should have maybe a jukebox, a pinball, and a few video games in his store room. If he has more than that, he is storing equipment for whenever a need arises. Then he is forcing what he has in his warehouse into the need. Even if he trades in his extra equipment, then comes back and buys the same piece for a little more, he is better off filling the proper need for his customer.

Are you allowed to send product back to the manufacturers?

I don't think I've ever been able to send product back. However, in some cases they will help us move product to other distributors, or if they have an overseas market, they will help us get rid of it there. They may also give us an allowance toward other product. Some factories are very good about that and some aren't.

The factories want to introduce equipment that will earn well. Sometimes things happen in the market between the concept and the introduction that the manufacturer has no control over. If a factory tests a game in March and it takes until May to get it out, many things could have happened in the industry during that time. Another manufacturer may have come out with a hot game.

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You had mentioned earlier about testing. Have you ever in your own mind solved the whole problem of testing?

We spend a lot of time talking about it, but I don't know that there is really an answer. One of the problems in distribution is trying to evaluate product and order the proper amount of equipment. We need valid test results to base our decisions on, but I don't know that we really ever get it.

Is there anything else you would like to talk about?

You don't want to ask me about my manufacturing experience?

Oh yes, you manufactured the ***Hot Seat*****.** Do you really want to bring it up?

(Roaring laughter) It was interesting because the experience has given me a whole new outlook on the tremendous job that the manufacturers are doing. Back in my early distributing days, I did not have a lot of lines. I have always been an individual who looks for new ways to make a living. So when I was approached by someone who seemed to have a good idea, I listened. His pitch was that he was going to build the game but needed someone to set up a distributor network. He thought I knew enough people so that I could do it for him; I did. They were not giving us huge orders, but all were taking sample orders. Just when we were ready to go, he says he doesn't have the money to build them.

I felt that with my experience, a college degree in manufacturing, and the distributor network set up, I would build the game myself. We set up a plant in Denver and started building them. We made about 140 of them. Lo and behold, there were some bugs that we couldn't work out. That's when my manufacturing career came to an abrupt halt. There are still some of those in arcades today that are doing very well. □

Here's Rich and Bev, all dressed up for one of their notorious theme parties.

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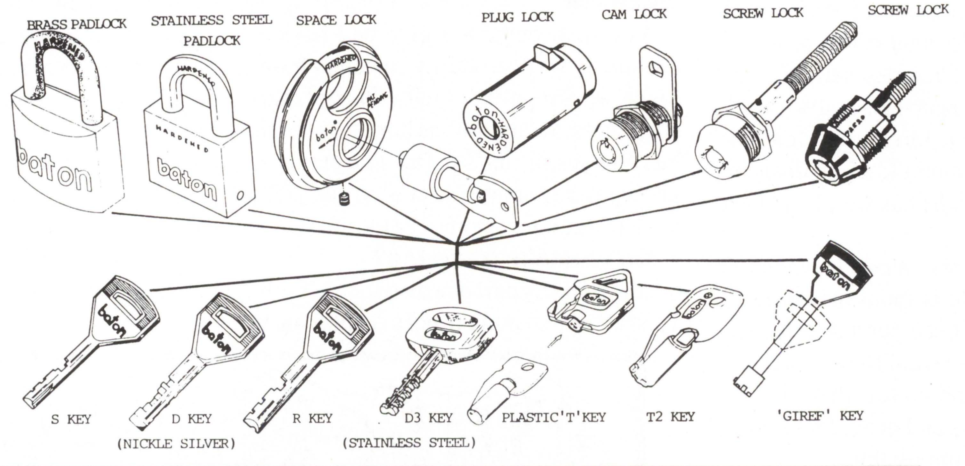
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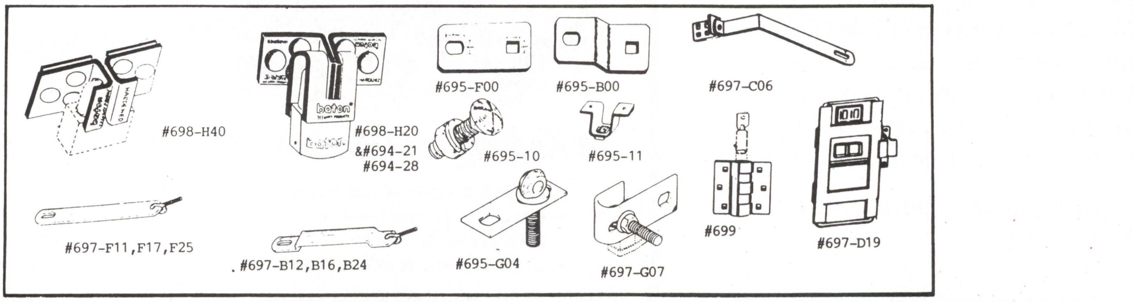
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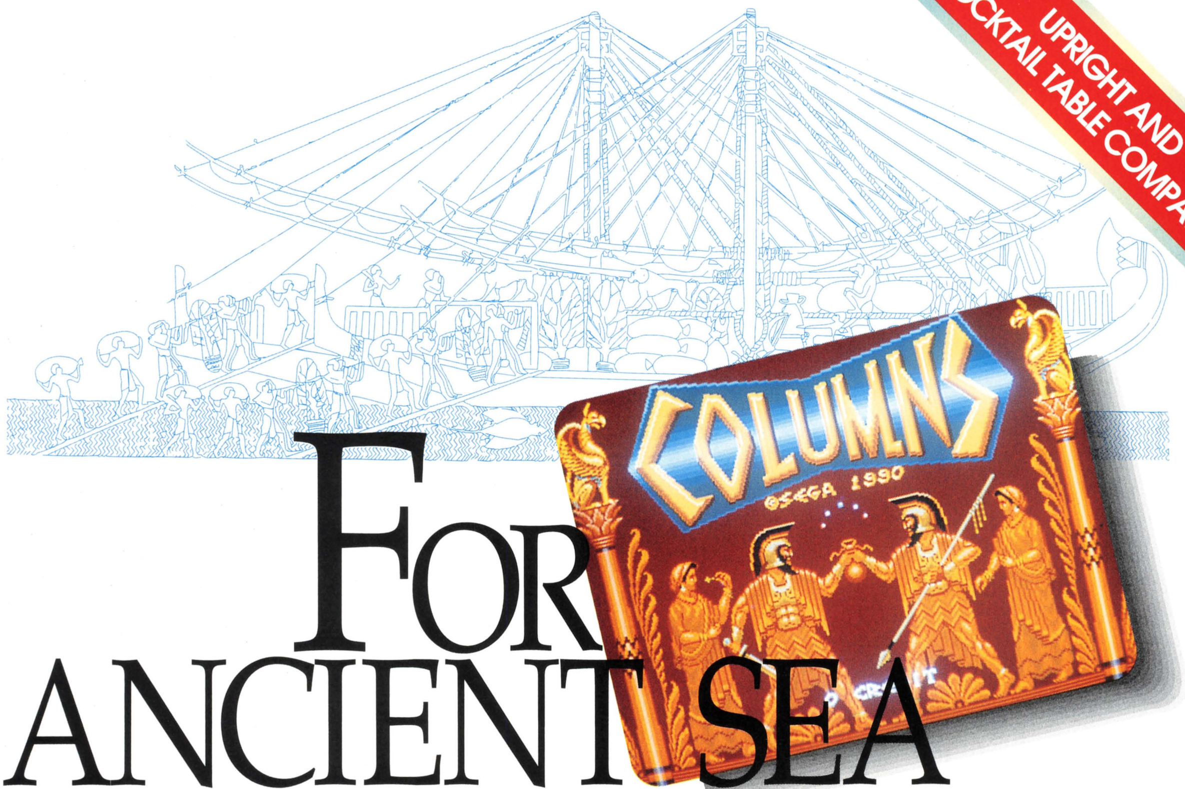

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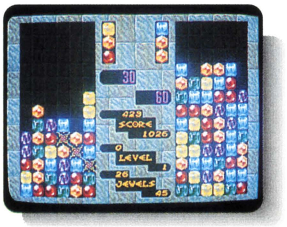
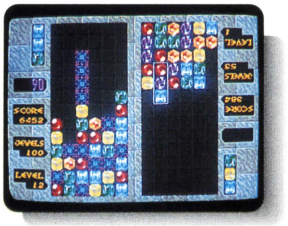


Upright cabinet configuration.



Cocktail table configuration.

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Christopher Caire

What's it like being the man in the middle?

He dreaded taking the phone call. The voice on the other end was usually quite friendly, but in matters such as these it became firm, steely—almost cold.

''Good morning, Steve. Tom from Video Kit Supreme calling. Listen, seeing as you're one of our top distributorships, we know you won't mind taking 50 of our hot new kit. Should be no sweat selling 'em. Thanks for the order. Say hello to Sheila.''

Click.

The little testing Steve was able to do on the kit returned grim numbers. ''This guy wants me to unload *50* of these things; he's out of his mind!'' Steve thought. A few days later one of his better operator customers came in to the office.

''Hey Paul, good to see you. Come take a look at our latest kit.''

''What kind of theme does it have?''

''Ninja fighters who chase after kidnappers, with the goal of rescuing the prime minister's third cousin.''

''Oh. What's your honest opinion, Steve?''

''Well..................................''

Such is the life of coin-op's middle man, the distributor. Many envision the distributor as forever balancing on a tightrope, trying to keep both manufacturers and operators happy. Some say his job has never been harder, what with a video market that's painfully soft.

Or is it? Is the state of distributing today any worse than the early '80s, for example? Might the preceding scenario be more myth than reality, a product of people's preconceived notions?

As with any issue, opinions vary; this one's no different. One distributor, Jim Wittler of Atlas Distributors Co., thinks the tightrope analogy is incorrect, that his job isn't so precarious. George Kane, an operator in Mississippi who used to work for Kane Distributing Co. before it went out of business, says anybody who wants to be a distributor in 1990 must be crazy. A third interviewee—a long-time distributor who wished to remain anonymous—summed it up this way: ''There just isn't any damned loyalty anymore!''

Jim Wittler

Wittler is vice president/general manager of Atlas Distributors Co. in Pittsburgh. He had extensive experience in food service management and vending before tackling music and games. (Wittler has a degree in food service management from Penn State University.) He went to work for Eastern Music Systems Corp. in 1981 and became the general manager for Atlas Distributors, Eastern's sister company, in 1987.

Atlas has experienced steady growth during Wittler's tenure, a fact reflected in these numbers: with about 10 employees,

> *''There are far too many manufacturers today. Every Japanese garage apparently houses a manufacturing company.''*

the company was doing between $2 to $3 million a year in total volume when Eastern bought it in 1984. Atlas now has 27 employees and roughly $8 million in total yearly volume.

What separates his and other successful distributorships from those which barely hang on or end up out of business? Being undercapitalized? Bad luck, i.e., caught in an industry down-cycle? Poor service? Lousy management?

''I would say it's a combination of poor management and not being flexible to changing market conditions,'' he said. ''What has made us successful is a strong distributor concept. We do a lot of marketing through mailers and public promotions. We keep our name in front of the customers by being active in civic affairs, like promotions for the American Cancer Society, for example.

''Also, the management style of this company is basically a team concept. We don't use time clocks. A guy who has to be here at 9 a.m. takes responsibility for himself by being on time and giving a full day's work. This team management philosophy has paid off for us. It's a mixture of that and picking the right lines of equipment.''

In order to grow as Atlas has, Wittler says, the company had to commit to increasing its inventory. Having product available at a moment's notice is critical.

''You have to make an investment in the necessary inventory in order to satisfy the customer,'' he said. ''If football is a game of inches, this business is a game of minutes. A customer may need something today to satisfy a location. The quicker I get it to him, the stronger he will be with that location—and the better I'll look in his eyes.''

Atlas is a strong believer in promotions. It runs between eight to 12 promotions a month across the company's 27 lines of music, games, and vending equipment. While one can see the tangible results of a decision to expand an inventory—company growth—gauging the benefits of aggressive promotional activity is not as readily apparent.

''I don't think you can put a dollar figure on what promotions have done for us,'' Wittler said. ''They have made us more visible to other manufacturers, who see how much work we're willing to do to promote a product. A couple of kit companies asked us to handle their lines because of it.

''You do some promotions better than others, knowing that if you didn't you wouldn't have sold as much. For instance, we recently had a very successful promotional run with the *Ameri Darts* kit from Ameri Corp. Normally a good kit run is 50 to 60 kits; we sold 123 *Ameri Darts* kits. The product was good; you have to have that from the start or the results won't be there. We did the same thing with Rowe recently on its stack vendor. We gave out special financing, and Rowe worked with us on some promotional dollars. Factories will do that if they see you're willing to put out some hard work for them. I'm very much into keeping our name in front of our customers, and promotions are the way to do it.''

What does a distributor do, though, when he's faced with the prospect of selling a game that simply isn't very good? How can he be honest with his customers and still move the amount of product that the manufacturer expects?

> ***''A game that 90 percent of the operators in New York say is a hit could easily be a dog in Mississippi, or vice versa.''***

''You can't fool the operator; you can't lie to him,'' Wittler said. ''If you tell an operator that a game is great 10 times, and he gets burned with a kit that makes him $10 a week, that customer will look elsewhere and never come back. There is so much trust in this relationship. The customer is relying on you to not only have the product, but to recommend product that's good. Take kits, for example. We test kits in *this* marketplace before going to customers with them. Just because something does well on the West Coast or Texas doesn't mean it'll be a hit in the Pittsburgh metropolitan area or western Pennsylvania. It could be a regional phenomenon. Testing is a service to customers. Service is what everything revolves around.''

But operators have been heard to say they'd just as soon do their own service work, that they would rather buy direct from manufacturers to save money on product. Wittler says such an attitude is shortsighted and detrimental.

''Operators would lose valuable service and market knowledge,'' he said. ''A manufacturer in Canada or on the West Coast, for example, can't give operators in Pittsburgh the personal attention that a Pittsburgh distributor can. That manufacturer might not be as aware of what's happening in the territory. Doing business from long distances by telephone wouldn't be as effective. You can't walk into a manufacturer's office and get a part or board that's down. It will have to be sent to you through United Parcel Service or some other carrier. Now your machine is down for a few days, and we all know that time is money in this business.

''It's probably true that operators would save money by not going through a distributor. But those operators aren't looking at the long-term advantages of a distributor-operator relationship. The distributor knows the marketplace better, has the equipment on local inventory, and delivers on their own trucks. How would the smaller companies uncrate equipment that arrives on a tractor trailer? My company runs two delivery vans every day, five days a week, with liftgates on them. We have delivery personnel that will go out and set locations for operators. No manufacturer would offer all of these things; we do it as part of our everyday service. But I'm not worried about the distribution end of this industry ever going away. It's a function that will always be necessary.''

One trend that's hurt distributors, Wittler believes, is larger operators buying the routes of smaller operators. These operators purchase equipment in large quantities, which in turn gives them a better price.

"This is shrinking the margins that distributors work with," he said. "The big companies are eating up the customer base. After a while, you may be left with 12 major customers in a market area who are all volume buyers. That shrinking margin is a point of concern for distributorships."

Deciding which games to buy, and how many, has always been an inexact science. Throw in a soft video game market and you've really got a crap-shoot on your hands, Wittler says.

> ***"If you don't test the product and make careful considerations, you could end up buying 20 kits and selling two of them."***

"I think most distributors would agree the market is soft, and when that happens you have to be even *more* particular," he said. "But our testing and sampling programs work for us. If you don't test the product and make careful considerations, you could end up buying 20 kits and selling two of them. Those 18 you didn't sell are yours; manufacturers don't sell product on consignment to distributors. For the most part, we have a good relationship with all of the manufacturers who deal with us. They understand where we stand, and we realize that they have to sell product. It's a two-way street."

Among the best aspects of being a distributor are the associations one makes and the rewards of a job well-done, Wittler says. On the flip side, the constant challenge to pick the right product can wear on you.

"You see the rewards for the work you put in," he said. "It may be being in business next year, or meeting the sales goal or quota that a manufacturer sets down. Selling is an immediate thing; you either get the sale or you don't. Making a sale is always gratifying. Also, I'm thankful for the relationships I've formed with the people within the distributorship and elsewhere in the industry. It's become a part of my life, not just a job to go to.

"On the other hand, it becomes hard sometimes to choose the best pieces. You always hate when you make the wrong decision. My other disappointments come when manufacturers don't do what they say they're going to do. For me, my handshake is my word; I don't need a piece of paper. That's the way I'd like our manufacturers to treat Atlas."

George Kane

Kane, who presently runs Kane Amusement in Hattiesburg, Miss., worked for his mother Marisa at Kane Distributing for about 10 years before it closed its doors in 1989. The company had branches in Mississippi, Florida, and Louisiana and did additional business in Alabama. A malady Kane has witnessed is the quickly fading value of equipment, the depreciation blues.

"That's the biggest problem right now that anybody can relate to, especially the small distributor," he said. "Depreciation follows in just the first week after the distributor has ordered equipment, while he's waiting to take delivery. I feel sorry for small distributors. They order equipment at a show and might not get it for two or three months. By that time, Joe Blow down the street may have gotten one from another source and is reporting good or bad on it. All the distributor has to go on is the flow of machines out there. I'm not criticizing the big distributors. I'm just saying that the little distributors are always in competition with them to get product faster.

"Right now, being a distributor would be stupid unless you were big. It doesn't pay; making a profit is more and more difficult. I don't know how many of them stay in business."

Kane says he always hated being in the situation of having to tell a manufacturer or an operator that a game wasn't up to snuff. The manufacturer certainly doesn't like to hear that a distributor can't move product, and it's obviously hard to sell an operator a game after giving it a bad review.

"I think honesty on our part contributed to the downfall of Kane Distributing," he said. "A lot of heat would come when we'd tell a manufacturer that a piece wasn't good, or we couldn't sell it, or however we chose to word it. They would say, 'You've got people out there who will buy anything that's new.' But Kane Distributing never, never operated on the premise that every new piece had to go out there. To be perfectly honest with a

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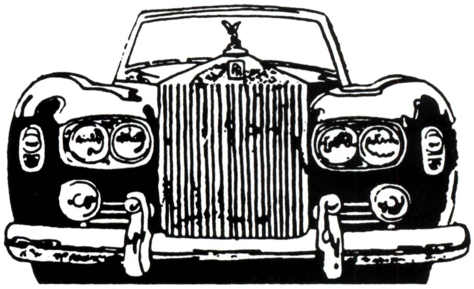

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customer was our goal. There's nobody in this business, Nolan Bushnell or anyone else, who can look at a video game and say, 'This piece is gonna rack the money in.' No one can predict with any certainty."

A lack of support from manufacturers in terms of test equipment, Kane says, made it hard for his mother to reach decisions on quantity for the distributorship. Test report data wasn't very helpful, either.

"It was seldom that Kane Distributing would ever get a piece to test," he said. "Every test result was from game rooms located all across the country. Heck, we didn't know those people, and even if we had it wouldn't have given Kane Distributing any guarantees. A game that 90 percent of the operators in New York say is a hit could easily be a dog in Mississippi, or vice versa."

Part of the reason that distributing isn't as desirable as it was in the "boom days," he feels, is the simple lack of respect and admiration that industry members once had for one another. Trust has been replaced by wariness and suspicion.

"The biggest enjoyment I ever got from this business was the camaraderie," Kane said. "There was a bond of admiration between a large percentage of the operators, distributors, and factories, even though they were competitors. It wasn't a dog-eat-dog environment, and that includes after the really prosperous years were over. But now, I can hear the dislike and lack of trust in people's voices."

"Right now, being a distributor would be stupid unless you were big. It doesn't pay."

Kane thinks the nature of service provided by distributors has changed. Previously, if an operator bought a defective piece his distributor would be summoned immediately to work on it. Today, he says, an operator simply fixes a game himself instead of waiting for a distributor to do it. With shrinking video revenues, having a game down for any sustained period is too detrimental to allow.

"It's not that distributors aren't doing their jobs," he said. "Operators just can't afford for a game to be down, loaded on to a truck, hauled to the distributorship, and so on. They've got to have a piece running continuously to make any money nowadays. This is a problem for distributors, since many operators are hiring better technicians or finding ways around using the distributor for service."

Kane believes stricter guidelines among all three industry tiers should've been implemented years ago, in terms of who can sell what to whom, where it can be sold, etc. However, he adds, that wouldn't have done much to counteract the current malaise.

"Operators, distributors, and manufacturers shouldn't point fingers and blame the other guy," he said. "It is an overall industry failure, which has led to kids losing their enthusiasm for our games. We're in the entertainment business; unfortunately, the entertainment business is

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subject to the whims of the customer. When we were doing great, the movie industry had one big hit and 20 dogs. Now the cycle has changed the other way. But I believe the coin-op industry will be back. I plan on being here through good and bad.''

Uncaring manufacturers?

One distributor, who spoke only on the condition that he be unnamed, says it is now more difficult to feel any sense of loyalty toward manufacturers. They have gradually become more disdainful, taking the attitude of, ''I want you to sell x-amount of product. If you can't do it, I'll find someone who can,'' he believes.

''There are some manufacturers who I couldn't care less about, because they constantly screw you.''

''I give a great deal of allegiance to companies like Capcom, Atari, Konami, and Taito, though Taito has changed drastically now,'' he said. ''But there are some who I couldn't care less about, because they constantly screw you. These manufacturers don't give a damn about distributors. They'll take your exclusive line and split it with another distributor, figuring they can double their sales. It doesn't work that way.''

A distributor who pushes equipment that he knows in his heart won't sell is not only being dishonest. He fosters unhealthiness in an operator, a condition that could boomerang back and strike the distributor, says our anonymous source.

''I will not sell equipment that isn't worth a damn, positively not,'' he said. ''If I sell something to an operator that doesn't work or doesn't earn for him, he becomes mad at me. It's not only that; I have trouble collecting his receivable. I must keep my operator healthy. When we feel, through testing or other methods, that a game isn't good, we won't sell it.

''I get really angry when manufacturers accuse us of being nothing but order-takers of good equipment. That's untrue. My people will not sell equipment that they know won't earn for the operator. The operator is the most important person of all. He takes my inventory and pays me. If it doesn't earn, he's either going to return it, complain about it, or want a reduction. He may be unable to pay his receivable. So it's definitely in my best interests to sell him good, earning product.''

How, then, does a distributor keep both sides happy—or is it even possible?

''I can keep the operator happy by selling him what I consider to be good equipment,'' he said. ''I can keep the operator happy by continuing to give him good service. I can keep the operator happy by the parts business I do with him. I can keep the operator happy by financing him. There are days, though, where I cannot keep the manufacturer happy, because he will not acknowledge that he's got a poor piece of equipment. They can get really nasty. If manufacturers would learn to test their games properly and look carefully at the U.S. market, instead of giving in to the pressures exerted by their Japanese superiors, things would be a lot different—a lot better.''

This distributor adheres to the old adage, ''Too much of a good thing can be bad for you.'' This applies to coin-op, he believes, in terms of the number of manufacturers building product.

''There are far too many manufacturers today; every Japanese garage apparently houses a manufacturing company,'' he said. ''There are too many guys in the business of importing boards from Japan. Some of these people are respectable, but others think you owe them loyalty. They've done nothing to deserve my loyalty. You can only get screwed so often.''

Another factor that's made his job harder than it was 10 years ago is the phenomenon of the national account.

''A lot of the independents we used to sell to have merged with national chains,'' he said. ''Many of the locations we had have disappeared; national accounts like Aladdin's Castle and Nickels and Dimes bought them out. We've lost that share of the business. In vending, if one of our manufacturers sells product in our territory to a national account, we get an override. But when the game manufacturer sells to a national account, we don't get anything! We don't even get the time of day from them.''

Video games like *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* and *Mercs* have helped salvage some revenue from a dried up market, he says, and pinball is even softer. Where does one turn for salvation?

''We're getting more and more into redemption pieces,'' he said. ''It is critical to change as the marketplace changes. If the people want redemption, give 'em redemption. If they want video cameras, I guess we'll have to find them! Give the customer what he wants.''

Despite all of the negatives he's cited, our distributor isn't ready to abandon ship.

''I've done this for a long time; I enjoy working with a lot of the operators out there,'' he concluded. ''Let's face it, this *is* an exciting business.'' □

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Question: *How would you describe the role of the distributor in today's market?*

DISTRIBUTORS

Pat Harper
J&J Distributors
Indianapolis, Ind.

First of all, I believe that a distributor should offer operators the finest equipment available from the finest manufacturers out there. Distributors provide much-needed financing, which operators can't get from local banks. Then the distributor must back it all up with service and parts. The manufacturer turns his back on the operator when it comes to service back-up. I'll admit that we don't sell all winners. So if one of those pieces doesn't fit the operator's needs, most distributors see fit to take it back. Obviously the manufacturers don't do the same for us. If there are service problems we eat it, not the manufacturers.

Each manufacturer is different. Some are more fair than others when it comes to cancelling orders. Some will even let us send games back. If we get stuck, there are those who will help. Some have better terms, and some *do* offer service.

We are in the Midwest, where 90 percent of the games we sell end up in street locations and taverns. We don't have many arcades in our market area. We hear claims about games doing $1,000 a week; we're thrilled to have one doing $300. Because we know our market so well, we are very selective about what we buy. It would be unreasonable to think we could sell many of a game that's obviously intended for arcades.

Distributors are also in the middle when it comes to getting a hot game. Let's face it, a manufacturer can only make so many games, no matter how good it is. Since everyone wants that game, they allocate so many to each distributor. On the other hand, operators very rarely deal with just one distributor, so they put in orders at 10 different distributorships and buy from the first one to get the game. Then they simply cancel the orders with the others. But I'm making a commitment to the manufacturer that I can't cancel. Once we make the order, it's ours.

We can't convince our customers to buy games that we know will not make money. If we try to do that, those operators will not buy from us anymore. I'll be honest; I have more unsellable inventory than I would like to have. If I can't sell games I have to blow them out at an auction—and lose my profit in the process.

There will always be distributors because manufacturers could never handle selling direct to operators. I'm sure they couldn't handle the financing. If you took a survey of the number of operators who pay cash for games, it probably would come to a mere one-third. The other two-thirds need some kind of financing. Freight would really add up on games, too, if manufacturers were shipping one or two at a time.

There is more to the amusement business than video games. We do sell videos and kits, but we also do an excellent job in music, pool tables, and dart games. If it wasn't for those, we would not be in the video business. The bulk of our good, stable sales are in the other three—not videos and kits. We have looked at the big picture to be able to guide our customers.

Mark Singer
Central Distributing
Omaha, Neb.

The distributing business is tougher than it ever has been. You are the middle man—providing financing, giving advice, taking trade-ins. Operators are counting on you. At the same time manufacturers, especially with the Japanese influence, are never satisfied. They think distributors can take unlimited quantities of product. Even while you are trying to satisfy the manufacturers, it's obvious that you can't load up your customers with mediocre product. For one thing, they can't pay for it. There is a saturation point, where the market just can't absorb the amount of product manufacturers are expecting us to buy.

But while the distributor's role is tough, it is also more important than ever because of our capital-intensive industry. Operators require financing and they need help with advice and service. I think it's important for distributors to operate to get true testing information. It's very important for distributors to get correct information to their customers. It's hard to sell equipment based on testing information from manufacturers. If an operator asks if a game is good, it's hard to say, "Yes, because the manufacturer told me so." I've seen test figures from manufacturers that don't look very valid.

There are two types of distributors who operate. Some are aggressive and compete with the operators in their area. But most are passive, like ourselves. If we get a call from one of our customer's locations, we will let our customer know. We make sure our customers get hot equipment even

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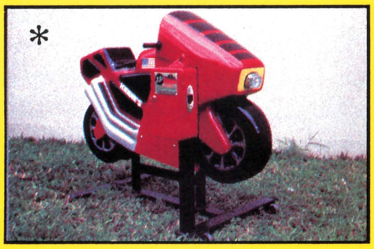
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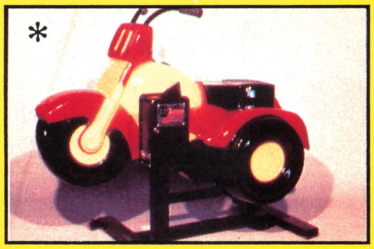
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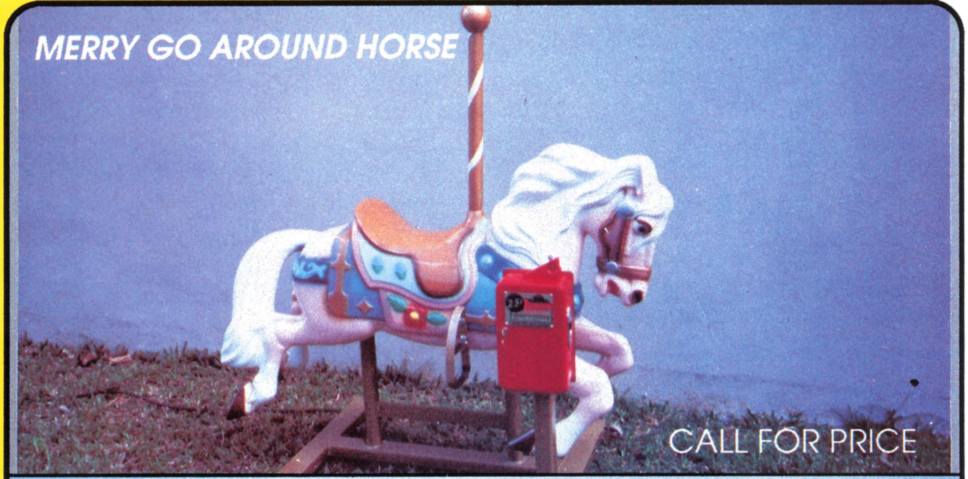
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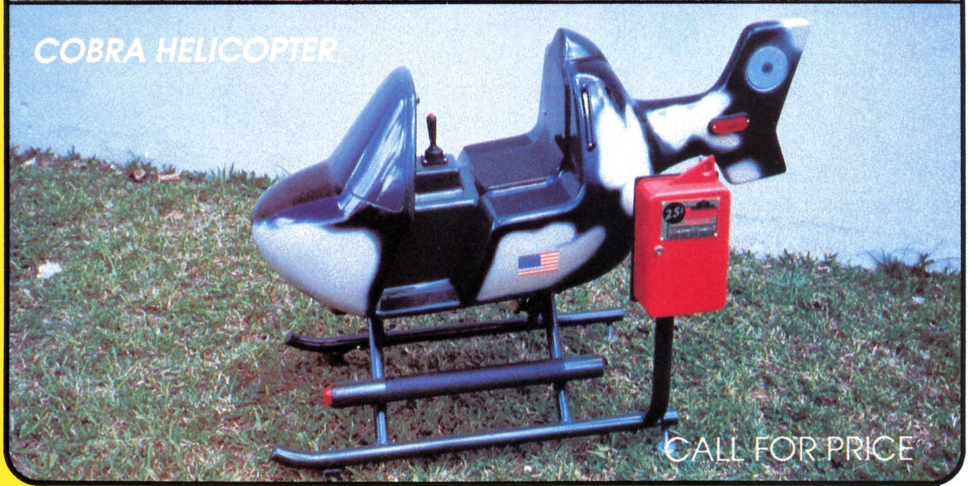
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before our own route gets it. Also, we do a big used games business. If one of our customers is looking for a game, we will pull it off our route to accommodate him. I would not have access to used equipment if I didn't operate.

Distributors are in a tough position. Our profit margins are small, contrary to some beliefs. There are those that think distributors are in the best position of all. We're actually in the least profitable end of the business.

I see a shakeout in distribution in the future.

Mark Loethen
Sunshine Distributing
Jefferson City, Mo.

Our role is that of middle man between the operator and the factory. It's a big responsibility. We will forward information from operators to the manufacturers about the type of games they would like or problems they're having.

The manufacturers really do want to make reliable product. They rely on operators for the final sale, so I'm sure they strive to get operators the type of games that show a fair ROI.

Distributors are caught in the middle. If the factory says a game should be a good earner and it isn't, operators will complain to me, but I don't complain to the factory.

A manufacturer couldn't sell to operators because he would have to deal with too many people. I'm taking care of 400 customers in my area. The factory only has to deal with me, not 400. I don't foresee manufacturers ever dealing direct with operators. To deal with everyday route problems would be impossible.

Factories want distributors because we are responsible for the sale. It's been an advantage having a route, because some operators will wait to see if a game makes money on my route or if it shows up in the trade magazine charts. Rather than wait, I will put games on my route and sell them to operators in six months when they decide they should've bought a certain game. We have to buy games anyway since we represent factories; this way we can put them out on our route.

It's hard being a distributor when operators are hesitant about buying a certain line. For example, several years ago operators were reluctant to buy a Bally pinball for fear of lack of quality in the workmanship. Since Williams took over, our Bally pinball sales have increased. Operators are reassured that the product doesn't have down time. Even the old ones that I can't sell are put on our route; they make money.

Though our customers are basically loyal, if we put them on credit-hold they will go to a competitor for product. Operators play games among distributors, which hurts the whole industry. Sometimes they will buy somewhere else because of price.

Our salesmen know their customers and keep a file on each one. They know their customers' locations, where they are today, and where they're headed. We analyze our customers to make buying decisions. Part of our job is to make sure our customers make money.

Rick Kirby
New England Coin-Op
Norwood, Mass.

We're like policeman: we have to police the flow of product and throw up our hands when it gets too bad.

I think it's being done. There are some manufacturers that I won't even take samples from. I even dropped one major line because my customers were not making money with its products. Although we are never forced to take product, we need equipment. After all, I can't sell from an empty warehouse.

Our role is really no different than it always has been. We are the middle men. We are the bankers, the advisors, and hopefully the friends of the industry. The key is our role as a partner of operators and manufacturers. You can't lie to your partners. We can't lie to operators any more than manufacturers can lie to us.

However, our role *is* different because we don't operate. I feel that our operators have confidence in us because we're not out there beating their heads in.

I'm the marketing arm for the manufacturers I represent. My role is to promote new equipment and new trends, share ideas, and keep our customers informed. I talk with other distributors all over the country to keep on top of what's going on.

We're seeing a trend in redemption right now. I've been talking to distributors who got involved in it before anyone else. We share ideas that we get from operators and pass them on to each other. I have to give my customers advice and answers to make them more money. The more money they make the more they spend. If I've done my job right, they will spend it with me. I'm an information booth for my customers.

OPERATORS

Jim Overman
Game Master Amusements
Baton Rouge, La.

A local distributor's number one responsibility is servicing equipment. He should not stock a large supply of new equipment on his own showroom floor. I think distributors should be operators to test games and to survive.

It's just so hard for a distributor to buy a piece of equipment for $2,400 and have a profit of maybe $300. If he doesn't sell it, the game will just sit there. When he operates he can put the equipment out to make income.

Distributors who operate are competition to operators, but it could also be an advantage to us. I would not like to be a distributor because I would have to tie into manufacturers that want me to commit to dogs as well as winners. Why would I

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want to make that kind of a commitment to someone's line when I can just sit back and buy the games I want $200 above cost? I can buy from New York to California. I buy very few dedicated games—only *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. I am blessed to be close to Louis Boasberg in New Orleans, who is a great source of used equipment at competitive prices.

Distributors are between a rock and a hard place. The only way they will sell product is if they give terms to their local operators. When it comes to price I can go out of state and get it cheaper. A local distributor may only buy five or six new games. The bigger distributors in New York or somewhere like that may buy 50 of the game, get a price break, and pass it on to operators.

I don't have a local distributor that I can count on for service. We send PC boards to a kit repair house. They are so good that it's usually under $50 and takes just two days. My strongest competition is a distributor. If one of my customers called him, he would give me the courtesy of calling to let me know. I'd do the same for him.

You hear operators saying they want to be distributors, but I don't know why. "The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence" is a saying that would certainly apply. Everyone thinks distributors are making lots of money, but they can't be. They can't always pick winners. They will have plenty of games that can't be unloaded. That cuts into the profit they make on other games. They are behind the eight-ball. I'm doing quite well as an operator because I can shop around.

Terry Volk
Bullseye, Inc.
Madison, Wis.

First, most distributors are nothing but large operators. Distributors are only worth their salt if—and that's a very big if—they offer update information on products they sell as soon as they know about it. Many distributors will hold back product update information so they can sell the operator the necessary parts later on. I think this is an important part of a distributor's job.

Another thing distributors have to do is be honest about earning potential on product. They have some idea. In fact, most say they also operate so they can test equipment. Plus, they are representing manufacturers who supply information to them. They should be honest with us.

Unfortunately, I believe that the big operators can buy direct. Only smaller ones are forced to go through a distributor. Of course, there are exceptions. I don't think any operator, big or small, could buy a Rowe jukebox direct.

Distributors should take trade-ins and sell good used equipment. Many distributors don't even want to take trades; they only want to sell new product. That leaves operators with the challenge of seeking out other operators to buy their used equipment, which takes a lot of time. If we could just take our used equipment to a central warehouse, like our distributor, we could sell it and at the same time look at the other used equipment he has to sell.

One big advantage that distributors have when they operate is that they can buy product at wholesale prices, operate games on their routes for six months, and then sell them to us at new-game prices.

My thinking is that if a distributor wants to be successful and really help operators, he should provide education in addition to financing. Many operators right now are afraid to raise pricing. They aren't sure how to do it or even if it will be successful. That's where the distributor comes in. He should help the operator understand why it can work and how to go about convincing his locations.

One of the biggest problems with distributors is that they don't know much about promoting. In fact, some don't know much about selling, either. Too many of them just want to concentrate on fast-moving product. But there's a lot of product out there that can make operators money. For example, we have Tornado foosball tables that are making us fantastic money. Yet few distributors even sell them. Why? Because Tornado does not give terms and you have to pay cash.

Too many distributors want to politically control their markets when they could have the control by being quality distributors. We need to see some young, aggressive distributors who know about promotions, who will offer education and honest advice to operators.

Phil Elum
Elum Music Co.
Massillion, Ohio

The number one role of a distributor is to provide financing for operators. He should also provide equipment, act as a warehouse for operators so they don't have to inventory a lot of product, and make operators aware of new equipment. He should call, send information, or visit operators to tell them about what's new. Our distributor does a little of each.

Although operators probably could buy direct from manufacturers, they would likely have to pay for the equipment C.O.D. Operators need 30 to 90 days to pay for new equipment; distributors provide that time. That's why distributors may have to mark the price up. After all, they are carrying operators that long.

I also don't think that manufacturers would want to take hundreds of phone calls from operators who buy one or two games at a time. They would much rather talk with 50 or so distributors who are buying truck loads of equipment.

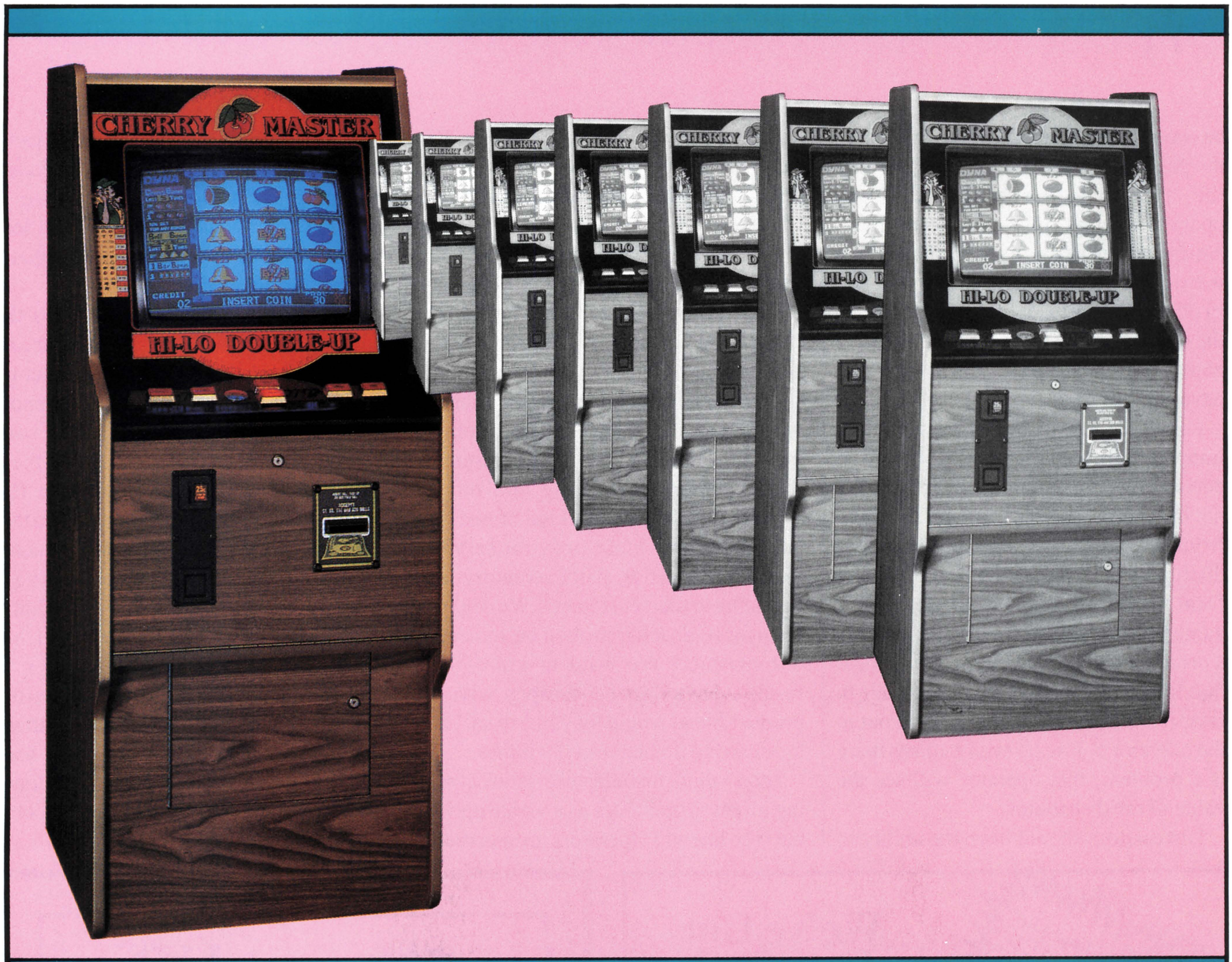
Warehousing games for operators is very important. It's nice to know that when I need a pool table I can simply call my distributor to get one fast instead of keeping some in my warehouse. Many distributors don't take trade-ins. I think they should do more of it.

But I can see their side. There is not a lot of good used equipment that customers would want to trade in. Most of it would be older games that other operators really wouldn't want to buy. Also, distributors are aware that some of the replacement parts needed to recondition a game may be worth more than the game itself. You might have to repair a board that costs more than you could sell the game for.

Used equipment has so little value. It's not anyone's fault, but it doesn't pay for a distributor to get involved. We sell our used equipment to someone who only deals in used equipment.

Distributors are a viable part of the industry, but they will have to work to continue to be a viable part. The manufacturers and operators are not going to hold their hands; they have to make their own place. Distributors belong in this industry and should continue to be a part of it.

More than anything, distributors must



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be consultants. From what I have heard, in the past distributors would buy anything the manufacturers made. In turn, operators bought just about everything. Now the distributor serves as a buffer between the manufacturer and the operator. In other words, the operator is looking to the distributor to steer him to the correct games that are reliable, earn well, and have resale value.

One of the roles that operators will find important in a distributor is that of liaison between manufacturers and operators. It's not only important for us to get feedback from operators; it's also important for distributors to give feedback to operators from manufacturers. For example, if a game has a certain problem that requires a prom change, a distributor should pass that information on to his customers. In fact, if a distributor sends the chip out to the operator before he even realizes there is a problem, that operator will see the value of the distributor.

Distributors should have the ability to anticipate instead of merely reacting. It is one of the things that can set one distributor apart from another, even in the same town. Which distributor would you want to buy from—one that sells a game but you never hear from again, or one that keeps you informed and up-to-date? With the market like it is today, a distributor probably has more importance than ever before.

I'm sure that there are many distributors who do not stock all of the games coming out. Some manufacturers put pressure on them to take everything and buy in volume, but it's not that kind of market.

Distributors must provide service, technical expertise, parts inventory, and financing to their customers. We count on them for feedback from their customers on our product. We want to know their results—have they been happy with the product, what would they like to see, and how can we do better in the future.

I don't think manufacturers look at selling direct to operators as a viable option, but who knows? Operators must perceive a distributor as an added value. It's a value to them to go through a distributor because of service, financing, parts, and advice. A manufacturer would need a lot of field representatives to give the service that a distributor does.

Another thing that is important is the personal touch between a distributor and his customers. The successful distributors are better because of the trust and rapport they have with their customers. I've seen distributors who ship games to their customers automatically. When the operator calls, the distributor tells him that the game will do good in such-and-such a location. He'll tell the operator to send it back if he decides not to keep it. That's how certain the distributor is of his customers. Now to me, that's a powerhouse distributor. The better distributors really know their customers—all the details. The more they know about their customers' operations, the more effective they can be in recommending games.

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MANUFACTURERS

Frank Bundra
Ameri Corp. Inc.
Hoffman Estates, Ill.

Distributors are an absolute necessity in order for manufacturers to properly service our end customer—the operator. You can't do that over a long distance phone call. There might be a product here or there with problems that can be taken care of over the phone, but not most. You need a local service center to service the customers.

That's just from a service point of view. The other value is that when a distributor's salesman is doing his job properly, he really knows his customers. He should know his operator customers almost as well as they know themselves. The salesman should be aware of the operator's needs through past experience with product. A distributor should help operators weed through product to determine their needs.

If you are talking about a distributor who is not filling those needs, then it's a different story. But it is the problem with that particular distributor, not the distributor network as a whole. When salesmen become order-takers instead of teaching operators and guiding them to the proper equipment, there should be some changes made.

Some operators have to be hit over the head to get into something new, like dart tournaments. Distributors should approach their customers with ideas—like tournaments—and be able to report the experiences of other operators. Operators who have stayed with videos are scared. Distributors should be aware of this and guide their customers toward other alternatives.

Operators don't need and shouldn't have a distributor who beats them over the head to sell a game. A distributor's job should be much more. Operators need a distributor for good, sound advice. But to be able to give that advice, distributors must know their customers. Distributors should even go out on the route with their customers occasionally to get the whole picture and stay informed.

I don't think you would want to work with a distributor any more than you would a stockbroker who doesn't understand the whole picture. Distributors should not only know but help operators understand the whole picture. If a distributor simply agrees with everything operators say, he's doing them a disservice. There is no one in this industry who knows everything. As as soon as you quit listening, you are simply treading water—no one can do that forever.

Larry Berke
Jaleco USA
Niles, Ill.

The distributor is a vital link in our industry. He takes on receivables, sells the product, and provides the service. Yet when the operator has money and is ready to buy, he does not want the distributor. If the operator wants to pay cash, he wants to know how to buy from—without going through the distributor.

But realistically we need distributors for service. The manufacturer would constantly be deluged with phone calls if there were no distributors. Even now we get quite a number of phone calls, and some are pretty silly. I would hate to think of the ones we would get if our distributors were not handling most of them.

But to be successful, a distributor must be in tune with what's going on. All too often I find a distributor who says that he doesn't mess with the games anymore; he lets his salesmen do it. That's not a good sign. You have to be like Ira Bettelman, who knows exactly what is going on. He is there, and that's what makes him successful. You don't find him on the golf course. You will find him checking in at arcades and keeping on top of things. Nothing gets by him.

I don't think that as a manufacturer I could start selling in the street. Distributors are the ones that need to pound the pavement. Each manufacturer is greedy enough to acknowledge that distributors handle every line, but they must give each 70 percent! A distributor cannot do justice to everyone if he handles every line. He is anxious to sell the hot stuff. The only time a smaller manufacturer fits into the plan is if he happens to get a hot game.

Leroy Hancuff
I. VICS
Santa Clara, Calif.

Besides the obvious things like providing service, parts, and financing, a distributor should be involved in promoting equipment. Since I came from a distributing background, I've been surprised by the attitudes of some of the distributors I've talked with. Since we are the new kids on the block, many are telling me that they are loyal to the lines they have and don't want to take on new lines. One even told me that my game *Meta Fox* was better than some of the games he had from other companies, but he had to be loyal to those manufacturers.

I've also seen that some of the distributors are order-takers, when they should be out promoting. I believe distributors in today's market need to work more closely with operators than they do. Not only do they need to promote equipment, but they need to follow through. They need to get feedback from their customers as to what kinds of locations the games did well in and what types it didn't. If he gets that feedback, he will know which customers to call when certain products come out. He can't wait for operators to come into his showroom and randomly pick product.

With the equipment today, some games are targeted for one type of location, some for others. It helps distributors to know which customers need which type of games.

There was a distributor who had sold some of my games. I was trying to get one of his branch offices to take some games, and this is what he told me: "One of your games is down the street. My customers know where it is, so if they want one they can come in and ask for it." ☐

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"'Near new'' game market valued by distributors

Funnyman Robin Williams recently granted an interview in which he summed up his early Hollywood days by saying, "I felt like a hemophiliac in a razor factory." Distributors in the '90s may feel the same way. With new video game sales decidedly down, the "near new" game market has become even more important. Like operators, distributors are diversifying and not relying too heavily on one type of coin-op equipment.

To find out what role "near new" equipment plays in their business, Play Meter contacted World Wide Distributors in Chicago, Warehouse of Games in St. Louis, and R.H. Belam Co. Inc. in Hempstead, N.Y. Conversations were enlightening.

Doug Skor
World Wide Distributors

According to Doug Skor of World Wide Distributors in Chicago, "I've never seen such a lack of response from the operator's standpoint. It's difficult to even get them to discuss new video and pinball equipment. It's easy to understand the reluctance: game costs, repetitive themes, and a drop in gross earnings on video at the present time.

"There's a lack of ingenuity from the manufacturer's standpoint. How many times can you kick, punch, and stab? It's time to move on to new thoughts and concepts—perhaps time for new technology."

Used games, or reconditioned games, represent 40 percent of World Wide's business. Of that amount, 60 to 70 percent is taken up with video and pinball games. There's a Catch-22 here. Said Skor, "Because of the lack of interest in new equipment, it's made good, used equipment less available."

What are Skor's customers looking for in the used market? "The operator wants to buy the most recent used piece he can find. It depends on what type of location he's looking to purchase equipment for. Seasonal locations such as campgrounds and water slides have a somewhat confined customer base and may not necessarily need the newest games. Some operators seldom buy new equipment; they prefer to wait and buy good, reconditioned pieces."

World Wide has been in the distributing business for 48 years. Over time it has established an excellent reputation overseas and domestically, which keeps them busy reconditioning games. World Wide has a staff of 18 technicians.

Skor stressed four major elements needed to deal in used equipment:

1. A technical staff to accomplish the reconditioning of games. 2. Accessibility of parts and easy availability. 3. Willingness to take a piece and invest the time needed to make it look its best. 4. Standing behind the equipment you sell.

World Wide works from orders. When an order comes in it goes to the shop. The game is reconditioned, then crated up and sent to the final user. World Wide's name is appropriate since the company focuses a great deal of attention on the European market, Australia, New Zealand, and part of South America.

When asked if changes in eastern European countries such as Romania would affect game sales overseas, he said, "It's not affecting us now, but it will in the long run."

Added Skor, "Each country is a market unto itself and that's where the expertise of the distributor comes in. Any distributor entering that market must know what he's doing."

Are all our popular games equally successful overseas? "Pin tables (pinballs) are popular in Europe," said Skor. "On the video end, drivers and games with unique controls and mechanisms will hold their own. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* was not popular in Europe because Europeans are not as fad-oriented as we are here in the states."

As a full-line distributor, World Wide has a healthy vending business. "Vending has become more important to the distributor lately because of the lack of interest on the part of the amusement operator," commented Skor. "We have three separate divisions—music, games, and vending. Our market has never been big on redemption for one reason—it's illegal to redeem in many municipalities in Illinois."

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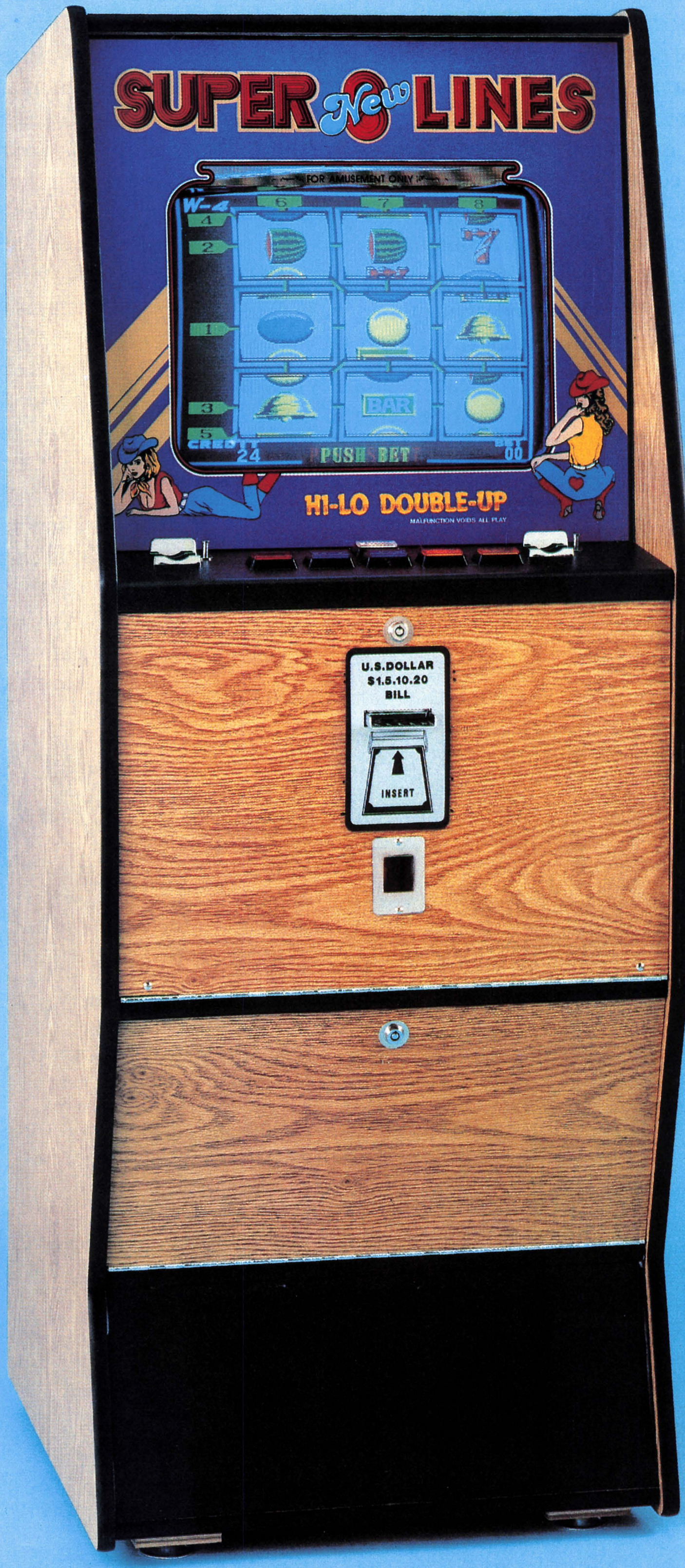
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At present, pool tables and darts are doing well for World Wide, as well as music and vending. ''The secret to distributing is diversity,'' noted Skor. ''You can't be a distributor for only video games. You need to be in all facets of the business.

''Distributors are needed in this industry. Perhaps an operator could save $100 going somewhere else, but he needs an established distributor. There are a lot of manufacturers that claim to be distributor-oriented, but somehow they turn around and sell directly to the operator. That's bypassing the distributor. We need all three levels in this business, primarily because of the service support and financing provided by distributors.''

Barry Schraier and Larry Potashnick Warehouse of Games

Partners Barry Schraier and Larry Potashnick purchased Warehouse of Games in January 1988. The company already had a 10-year history of selling used equipment. The new owners decided to enlarge the scope of the company and become a full-line distributorship. Warehouse of Games currently carries 14 manufacturer's lines and occupies 16,000 square feet of space for office, showroom, and warehouse facilities. Of that space, 6,000 square feet is designated solely to used equipment.

Schraier and Potashnick have an underlying theory on how to handle used games. These are the major points:

1. Space to properly display the games. 2. A strong technical staff to supply refurbishment and maintenance. 3. Knowledge of the marketplace. 4. Foresight to buy and sell properly.

Potashnick said, ''If you're going to be in the used game business, it's almost a separate operation. You need the capital, space, personnel, and experience to buy and sell properly since both are equally important. Operators are willing to pay fair prices. Well-priced games will move in an orderly fashion. If you are overpriced, the market will not absorb product.

''Essentially we do two types of buying: speculative and request. In speculative buying we purchase equipment we feel can be used by our customers. And we respond to requests for certain game titles. This creates a good relationship between the customer and the distributor. Operators want to move games on trade and we attempt to work with their requirements.''

Schraier finds there are many different types of operators: those who buy all new games, those who buy new and used, and those who buy only used games.

''Certain operators will wait a month to see if collections stay steady, then they will jump in and buy a new game,'' he said. ''In major cities the market is so competitive that operators are forced to buy new equipment or their competition will put it in. But even operators in big cities have locations that don't warrant all new

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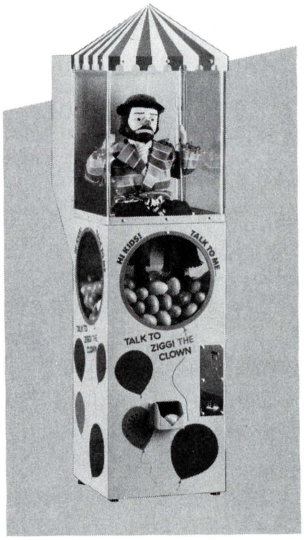

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equipment—that's where filler pieces come in.

"Operators outside of a metropolitan area can wait a little longer and buy games on an 'almost new' basis. If an operator did not purchase *Golden Axe*, for example, he may still seek one out at a later date because of the game's reputation."

Used games represent 20 percent of the business at Warehouse of Games. "We take trades on any manufacturer's games," said Schraier. "The market dictates what a piece is worth. We do a large volume of business in used equipment and have a good feeling about pricing. Since we deal with both the seller and the buyer we set the prices in our area."

He added, "We have a number of buyers out of major metropolitan markets who are simply looking at ROI. They can't make adequate returns on disproportionately high-priced games. They look for games at a price point good for their market. That puts them generally in the spot of having late-model, clean equipment."

And what happens to games that no longer have a "street value"? "Games that are beyond secondary status to even rural operators can be sold to homeowners for recreation rooms," said Schraier. "This is a definite trend and we try to capitalize on it. Fall is the best season for this type of sale. Games still have entertainment value if not 'street value'."

Potashnick noted that some operators have plenty of reserve equipment, some do not. "Instead of trading games," he explained, "operators may keep older games for parts. The value of the game could be so low that it's more economical that way. The operator's needs come first, then the Warehouse is there to trade excess games. We are an entity that helps operators when they need to move equipment."

Marc Haim
R.H. Belam Co. Inc.

R.H. Belam actively solicits new and used equipment business and enjoys a very active trade in eastern Europe as well as Latin America. The used game market is strong, says Belam's Marc Haim.

"The local operator is quite choosy in the equipment he buys," stated Haim. "Operators are product-conscious. For all but the best games, local operators are sellers rather than buyers. Generally speaking, they prefer to buy a prime game at normal price rather than a secondary game at a cheaper price.

"Foreign buyers are often interested primarily in price and are more likely to buy secondary games. We mix recent prime used games in our offerings to foreign buyers because it's important that overseas operators earn good money from their investments."

Haim feels that each market must be surveyed on an individual basis, noting, "In a virgin market, secondary games earn substantial revenue. In a mature foreign market, they are as hit-conscious as American operators."

"Because of the lack of interest in new equipment, it's made good, used equipment less available."

He cited successful games of the past such as *Hang On, Pole Position,* or *Galaga*, which are demanded in the secondary market because there is still an appeal and they are priced attractively.

Belam looks especially to promote the product lines it represents. Moving used games in the lines of manufacturers the company represents sustains the used equipment value and trade value. "We try not to purchase games that we feel cannot be resold," commented Haim.

What games are not popular in foreign markets? According to Haim, specialized theme games such as baseball games don't do well in foreign markets. Also hard to sell are standard push button and joystick games that are available from Oriental suppliers as boards.

Haim said, "There are important restrictions and controls in all the less developed countries, making price extremely important. Where 'boards only' are available, local assembly of machines is more practical and makes the sale of complete machines almost impossible.

"The strength of our business lies in the relationship we have with existing customers, our familiarity with various markets, and the sales and marketing strategies that we use."

Belam's sales representatives are on commission in various markets, plus the company has a sales force in New York which regularly travels to foreign markets to solicit business. "We are as close with our foreign customers as we are with our local customers," explained Haim. "We meet with them as frequently as domestic customers. The distance in miles does not affect our proximity to them."

Belam is very service-conscious and sends boards and spare parts overnight on a regular basis to take good care of it customers. The company seeks exposure and opportunities to promote its product lines. One example is the emerging market in Mexico. According to Haim, "Mexico has been one of the boom markets of the past year."

On the domestic side, Haim feels there is an active market for prime hits, but a dull market for secondary pieces. "As a result, most American distributors cannot offer trade-in values," he observed. "Even some modest hits may not bring any money. Some distributors will refuse to trade in certain models. Our operators have no problem finding an outlet for their secondary used machines, due to the international nature of our business. It's a competitive advantage we have in the local end of our distribution business."

Conclusion

Although an important part of a distributor's business, dealing in "near new" games is not an area to be entered without doing substantial homework. Knowing the market, the equipment, and the capabilities of your company all play a part in the final decision.

One thing is certain: distributors who handle a large volume of used equipment offer a valuable service to operators. Call it recycling, if you will, but this is a needed process to make the best use of coin-op amusement equipment. ☐

David Snook

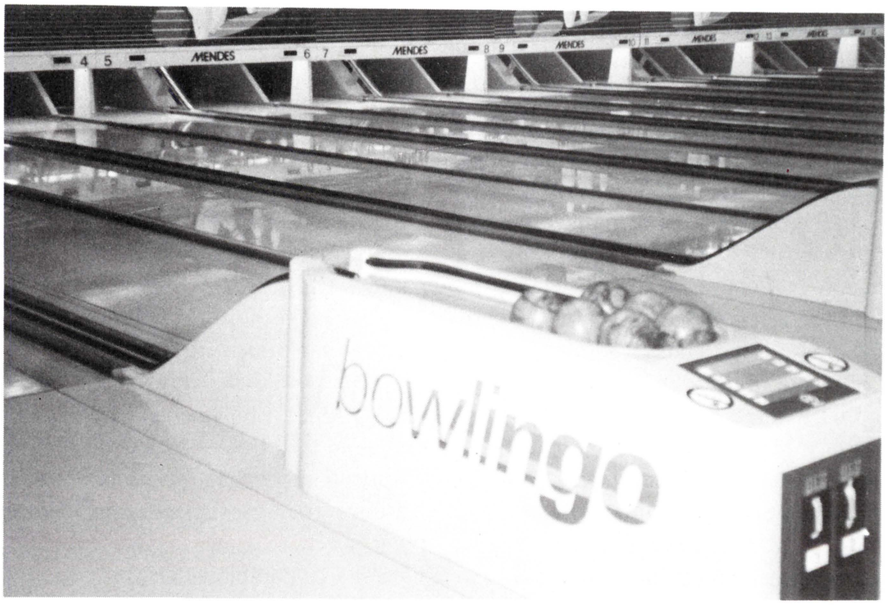
Bowlingo on its way to America

Tenpin bowling in its coin-operated format is set to make a comeback in U.S. locations, 45 years after United Manufacturing made *Bowlerama* at its Chicago factory. Chicago is ready to become the first U.S. city to take *Bowlingo*—today's version of the game. But now it's built in Canada and marketed through Belgium.

Work is about to begin on the project at a shopping mall in Chicago, where Nickels and Dimes, the game room chain, has a location. And negotiations are reaching a critical stage for a second major U.S. installation, another shopping mall in Dallas.

The game—built by Mendes of Quebec—is being handled in the United States by Ira Bettelman of C.A. Robinson and Jeff Walker of Geoffco, two West Coast distribution companies. They were appointed by the Belgian Amusement Co. of Antwerp. That company is headed by international coin machine personality Henry Grant, who has the world-wide marketing rights to the game (except in Italy).

He has similarly appointed a distributor in the United Kingdom—Reg Morosoli of DMD in London—who already has two installations of eight and 12 lanes up and running in County Durham. Meanwhile, handling *Bowlingo* exclusively in the Far East is Capcom of Osaka, who will shortly carry out its first installation in Japan.



Part of the *Bowlingo* 20-lane installation at the Belgian Amusement Co.'s arcade in Blankenberg.

Grant reckoned he had the last United *Bowlerama* still operating in Europe. That was two years ago. It was a coin-operated bowling machine circa 1946 or 1947. At last, he gave up trying to keep it going. Spare parts had long since disappeared, and production of the spares on an "on-off" basis was becoming far too expensive. That was when he found the Mendes *Bowlingo*.

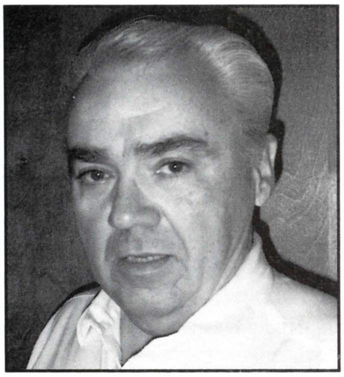
Grant went to see Mendes in Quebec and found a company of modest size, but with a good reputation for producing full-scale tenpin bowling—the real thing. They produced complete installations, principally for the United States and Canadian markets, but they had also developed a baby brother, *Bowlingo*. It was far removed from the table-top shuffle alleys and distinctly more up-market and closer to the real thing than the coin-operated bowlers still popular in Spain.

Having fallen in love with *Bowlingo*, Grant decided that the rest of the world should too. He took the world-wide distribution rights to the game (again, ex-

ON-THE-BALL

Profit Service Message #2 from Williams®

Jim Spinello, The Entertainment Industry of America


Ray Shroyer, Metro/Canale

Q: *Have you done any pinball promotions? Have they been successful?*

A: "I did a fantastic promotion with WHIRLWIND. Before it came out, only a few of us knew about it. To build excitement and curiosity, I pulled a pinball machine from an arcade and left the space open. On the wall I hung a sign that said 'Something's blowing in from Williams'. And I drew a spiral on the floor. That got everyone asking questions and made the first week phenomenal. That one promotion brought up pinball appeal in general."

A: "Right now I'm setting up a dart and pinball promotion where entrants have to play both. There'll be a 32 player grid. All the money is paid back to the players, except the coin drop and collections on the practice play. With a promotion like this every 90 days, the collections continue high. To get the word out and stimulate play, I place advertisements in the newspaper, hang ads in taverns and make phone calls to regular players to pre-register them.

"I've also done promotions where I've given away black & white portable televisions. The location shares the cost, which is minimal to begin with. They're high score competitions with the game reprogrammed every week to make it easier and keep interest high. The high scorers fill out cards in hopes of getting their names next to the winning numbers.

"There are all kinds of promotions you can do and you'll find you get back whatever you put in."

Ray Shroyer

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cept for Italy) and immediately installed a 20-lane *Bowlingo* center in his own arcade on the Belgian seafront.

Always reliable

This arcade in Blankenberg was thought to have the last working United *Bowlerama*. Grant found it a steady earner, but more importantly, it provided a major diversification within his arcade. The semi-sport added variety and proved to be an attraction for older youngsters.

''I ran them for 32 years,'' Grant said. ''I had to stop because they simply fell apart in the end. The games demonstrated high quality and longevity, attributes I sought in their replacement.''

He feels that the biggest killer to the coin-operated bowling game was the arrival of video games in the early '70s, when most arcades turned space over to this new form of entertainment. The Blankenberg arcade is the largest in Europe, with about 30,000 square feet. It is quite possibly the largest one in the world, so space was not a problem; the *Bowlerama* stayed.

When Grant started looking around two years ago, the games on the market consisted of four or five manufacturers in Spain and one in Canada—Mendes.

''The difference, in a nutshell, is that the Spanish games are suitable for cafes and amusement parks in ones and twos, while the Mendes version is designed for the operator who wants to give the player the impression that he's playing a real tenpin bowling game in cut-down form,'' Grant said.

''Even then, the lanes can stretch over 50 feet. But the attraction for the operator is that he can have the game built to his own specifications, to the length he requires. At anything less than 15 feet or so, though, the distinct and real character of the game is impaired. If I had room I'd put seats around it and run it like a real tenpin bowling center.''

What makes the game so similar to the ''real thing'' is that in cutting down its size, Mendes has preserved the proportions exactly. It has been scaled down literally, so that the ball and pin action remains the same. The pins themselves are much larger than those of Spanish competitors, and the ratio of ball to lane width creates the real effects and real noises of tenpin bowling.

All of this means, of course, that the Canadian version costs about twice as much as its Spanish counterparts, a fact not lost on Grant. However, he dismisses it immediately.

''It is like comparing a toy, a novelty game, to a reduced version of the real thing, a semi-sport,'' Grant said. ''And no one knows more about operating coin-operated bowling than I do. It will outlast the competitors, and I expect to still have it here 32 years from now, just as I did the United version.

''At the very least, I would expect it to represent a 20-year investment for the buyer. Anyone contemplating buying coin-operated bowling who doesn't look at *Bowlingo* is simply a bad businessman. I still like the slogan, 'You can only have it if you can afford it.' This indicates to me and everyone else that it is a serious investment.''

Grant sees the game as a multiple-unit installation. Technically, it only needs two lanes (the ball return is one-between-two). But the excitement is engendered by the sights and sounds around each lane, by the successes and failures of the bowlers on adjoining lanes.

There are several ways to operate the game, depending upon the site and level of familiarity with tenpin bowling in a particular country. Grant does not, for example, play the strikes and spares game, which is available on the unit. Indeed, it is designed that way, and instead offers just 10 shots per player.

This makes the game faster and less complicated for the Belgian client, who doesn't have the facilities of the real game to any great degree in his country. The score is flashed up on the electronic scoreboard above the formica-compound lane to show the game's progress.

Grant sees its potential in larger amusement arcades and annexes to arcades, or in amusement parks. However, he isn't keen on suggesting that the game stand alone in an arcade environment.

''*Bowlingo* is perfect when working along with other coin-op equipment,'' Grant said. ''I would not recommend that people erect completely separate buildings to house it and run a *Bowlingo* center. It may pay off, but my view is that it is a major centerpiece to an arcade. *Bowlingo* is for those members of a family not keen on playing videos or other games, or those who have played them but now want to try something different.''

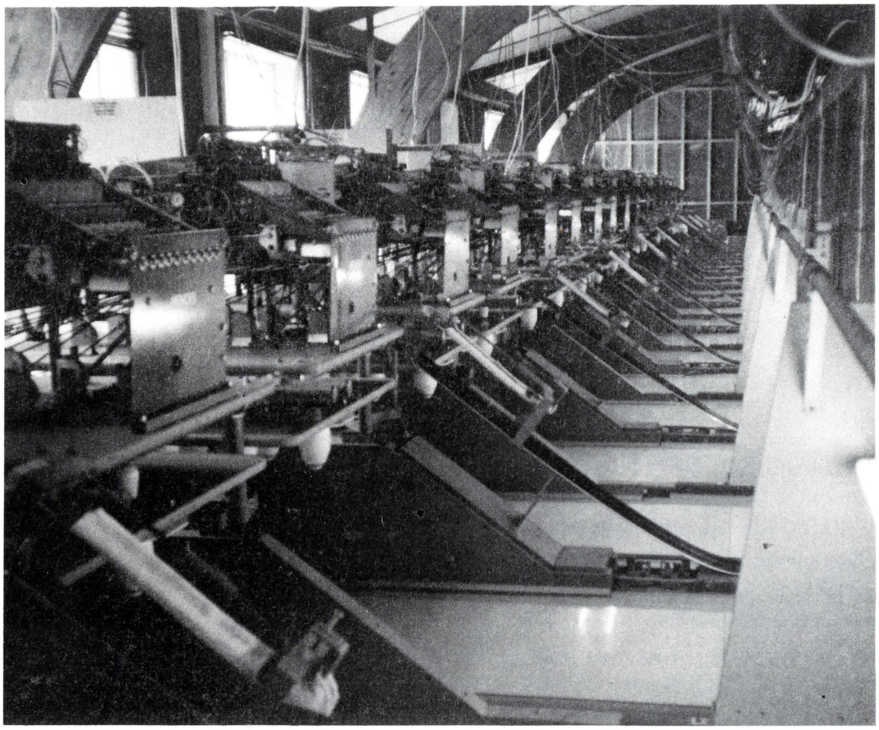
He is charging 40 Belgian francs to play the game, which comes to about $1.50 per player. The game lasts around eight to 10 minutes for two players, 15 minutes for four players. ''The sums are simple,'' Grant said. ''You can see the kind of income it generates in a busy site.''

But the point Grant kept stressing was that when compared with a video game, dollar-for-dollar, *Bowlingo* was a far better proposition because of its longevity—even taking the space factor into account. ''And it has to be remembered that the video game is not what it used to be,'' he said. ''Something really new, or something really old in a new format, is going to be welcomed by serious operators.''

Grant can forsee several hundred of the units being utilized throughout Europe alone, pointing out that the two initial installations in the United Kingdom total 20 lanes. He has geared up the Antwerp office of his Belgian Amusements Co. to handle the world-wide distribution and is in the process of fixing representation in different countries.

In addition to Direct Machine Distributors in London to look after the United Kingdom, Grant has appointed Capcom in Japan to take care of the whole of Asia. The large Japanese video game company is eager to see its coin machine interests diversified. After an extended

"Anyone contemplating buying coin-operated bowling who doesn't look at* Bowlingo *is simply a bad businessman."



Here's a view "behind the scenes." A 10-foot space is required to accommodate the pneumatic ball-setting equipment. Mendes is currently working on an electronic mechanism.

trip to Belgium to see the *Bowlingo* center in Blankenberg, the principals of the company immediately negotiated an exclusive contract. The first major installation in Japan is now a matter of weeks away from signatures.

One of the interesting pieces of feedback which has come from both sides of the Atlantic is an interest in Bowlingo by the operators of full-scale tenpin bowling centers. "They are looking at it as a pre-game filler for people awaiting lanes," Grant said.

Judging from the initial installation at Blankenberg and those which followed in the United Kingdom, Grant is looking at a construction and completion date of around 12 weeks from initial order.

No need to remove videos

Grant does not advocate taking out video games or any other kind of coin machine in quantity to install *Bowlingo*.

"No one is going to remove 30 other machines to put a *Bowlingo* in," he said. "That's not the way to do it. The operators I forsee using the game are those with big arcades and, say, a dodgem set in the back or some other major amusement installation with which they are disenchanted. It would also be ideal for someone who has an arcade that's ripe for extension into adjoining space or land, where a *Bowlingo* unit can be installed to work alongside the rest of the coin machines."

Finally, Grant points out that special shoes are not needed to play the game. In his experience, people don't steal the balls, either. *Bowlingo* can be used as a redemption game with a print-out ticket if the operator wishes.

"I'll issue an open invitation to any operator who is seriously looking for something really new—a major new attraction to his arcade or amusement park—to visit me here in Blankenberg during July and August," he said. "He will see *Bowlingo* at its best, when it is earning $1,200 per lane per week. There's the proof of the pudding." ☐

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Educational seminars get MOMA spotlight

Informative educational seminars, along with exhibits of the newest coin-op amusement equipment, highlighted the spring convention and trade show of the Minnesota Operators of Music and Amusements (MOMA). For the fifth consecutive year the event was held at the Sheraton Park Place Hotel in Minneapolis.

Operators from Minnesota, Wisconsin, and North Dakota were in attendance, as well as distributors and manufacturers of music and vending equipment. Guest speakers included Gil Pollock, president of the American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) and his own company, Premier Technology; Gene Urso of Madison Coin Machine, treasurer of the Amusement Machine Operators Association (AMOA); and Dick Hawkins of D & R/Star, vice chairman of government relations for AMOA.

Business management personnel were keenly interested in the slate of educational seminars and speakers: ''Surround Sound in the Digital Era: Omnisound Dolby'' by Herbert Gefvert of Audio Video Technologies, ''Why Redemption is Attractive to the Street Operator'' by Randy Chilton of Chilton Vending in Wichita, Kan., and ''Video Pulltab Update'' by Robert Latz, MOMA legislative and legal counsel.

In a different educational tone, this year the MOMA Education Scholarship Fund selected Lisa Womble of Winona, Minn., as recipient of a $1,000 scholarship. Lisa is a second year mechanical engineering student at Iowa State University.

From left: Andy Berglund and Todd Erickson of Summit Amusement, Dick Shelton of Valley Recreation Products, and Dick Hawkins of D&R/Star.

An overview of the large exhibit area.

The annual banquet included an auction and raffle—annual MOMA fundraisers. And it was the occasion to present plaques to outgoing MOMA president Tami Norberg-Paulsen of C & N Sales in Mankato, Minn., as well as outgoing board members and members of the MOMA President's Club. A cocktail reception prior to the banquet was hosted by Hanson Distributing and Lieberman Music.

MOMA also elected new officers: Ernest Woytassek, president; Roger Rasmussen, vice president; Dan Galvin, treasurer; and Charles Leininger, Sr., secretary. Newly elected to the board are: Don Awe of H. Awe Co., Dan Dahlin of Dahlco Music & Vending, and Ray Hibarger of Hanson Distributing.

Convention attendees were saddened to learn of the death of John Zeglin, retired sales manager of Lieberman Music. Hy Sandler, the association's executive director, paid tribute to Zeglin.

Convention planning was chaired by Linda Winstead, with assistance from Tami Norberg-Paulsen. The event was managed and coordinated by Hy Sandler. ☐

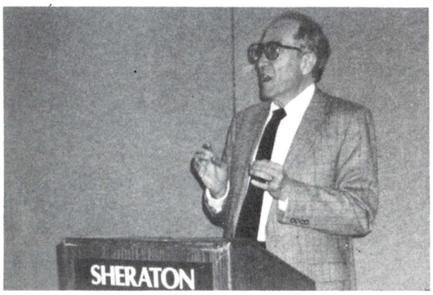
KLAX
Gottlieb

At the Hanson Distributing booth, (l-r): Mike Jablonski of NSM/Loewen, Tim Norberg of C & N Sales, and Scott Nelson of Hanson.

Jim Dubow of Active Coin Entertainment and Tami Norberg-Paulsen of C & N Sales congratulate Lisa Womble, MOMA scholarship recipient.

HANSON DISTRIBUTING COMPANY

Linda Johnson and Bruce Woytassek of Tri-State Music check out coin-op games.



Robert Latz, MOMA legal and legislative counsel, addresses attendees.

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TOP TWENTY

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HOT SINGLES

TITLE Label & Number/Distributing Label	ARTIST
1. Vogue Sire 7-19863/Warner Bros.	Madonna
2. All I Wanna Do Is Make To You Capitol 44507	Heart
3. Hold On SBK 07322	Wilson Phillips
4. Alright A&M 1479	Janet Jackson
5. Poison MCA 53772	Bell Biv Devoe
6. It Must Have Been Love EMI 50283	Roxette
7. Nothing Compares 2 U Ensign 23488/Chrysalis	Sinead O'Connor
8. Sending All My Love Atlantic 7-87961	Linear
9. U Can't Touch This Capitol 15571	M.C. Hammer
10. Ooh La La Columbia 38-73211	Perfect Gentlemen
11. The Humpty Dance Tommy Boy 7944	Digital Underground
12. Ready Or Not Virgin 7-98995	After 7
13. Turtle Power SBK 07325	Partners In Kryme
14. Hold On Atlantic 7-87984	En Vogue
15. Do You Remember? Atlantic 7-87955	Phil Collins
16. Step By Step Columbia 38-73343	New Kids On The Block
17. Your Baby Never Looked Good In Blue Arista 2011	Expose
18. This Old Heart Of Mine Warner Bros. 4-19983	Rod Stewart/Ronald Isley
19. I Wanna Be Rich Solar 4-74005/Epic	Calloway
20. Baby, It's Tonight Reprise 4-19869	Jude Cole

COMPACT DISCS

TITLE Label & Number/Distributing Label	ARTIST
1. I Do Not Want What I Haven't Got Ensign 21759/Chrysalis	Sinead O'Connor
2. Please Hammer, Don't Hurt 'Em Capitol C2-92857	M.C. Hammer
3. Brigade Capitol 91820	Heart
4. Pretty Woman EMI 93492	Soundtrack
5. Poison MCA 6387	Bell Biv Devoe
6. Soul Provider Columbia CK 45012	Michael Bolton
7. Janet Jackson's Rhythm Nation 1814 A&M CD 3920	Janet Jackson
8. Violator Sire 26081/Reprise	Depeche Mode
9. Nick Of Time Capitol C2-91268	Bonnie Raitt
10. Fear Of A Black Planet Def Jam 45413/Columbia	Public Enemy
11. ...But Seriously Atlantic 82050-2	Phil Collins
12. Wilson Phillips SBK 93745	Wilson Phillips
13. Shut Up And Dance Virgin 91362	Paula Abdul
14. Pump Geffen GHS2-24254	Aerosmith
15. Charmed Life Chrysalis 21735	Billy Idol
16. Affection Arista 8554	Lisa Stansfield
17. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles SBK 91066	Soundtrack
18. Forever Your Girl Virgin 90943	Paula Abdul
19. The End Of The Innocence Geffen GHS 2-24217	Don Henley
20. Johnny Gill Motown 6283	Johnny Gill

Seminars worth the trip to Ohio

The Ohio Coin Machine Association (OCMA) held its annual convention in Columbus at the Ohio Expositions Center on May 17. Unfortunately, it was a very inconvenient situation since the host hotel was several miles away and cabs were as scarce as the shuttle service. It left many grumbling that things better be more organized next year.

But the complaints did not fall on deaf ears. Before the end of the show, executive director Paul Corey was vowing that next year's show would be under one roof.

In spite of complaints about the logistics, no one could deny that it was a good show overall. The seminars were well worth the trip. Eddie Adlum of RePlay magazine moderated "CDs & 45 Jukeboxes--Now and the Future of Software/Records" with an impressive panel that included Wally Bohrer, Ted Howell, Joel Friedman, Paul Scribner, Sam Atchley, Bob Hesch, and Rus Strahan.

Jim Hayes of Gem Music and Vending moderated "Successful Route Management" with a panel that included Marty Glazman, Dick George, Larry Berke, Ric Rochetti, and Jim Stansfield.

For the technically inclined there was "The Best in Pinball Basics," moderated by Ron Rentz of R & Z Vending. The panel included Greg McKay of Williams, Pete Gustafson of Data East, and Bob Wilson of Premier.

"CD & 45s"

The "CD & 45 Jukeboxes--Now and the Future of Software/Records" drew a sizable crowd of operators. The four hours scheduled did not look too appealing until it began. Allowing for a short break and lunch, the discussion was constant and in-

ACME Premium's Jack Kelley (r) and Glenn Sagendorph.

Nintendo's Mike Minor watches a little boy play *PlayChoice*.

Taking a break, (l-r): Charles Comella of Cadillac Music, Norm Goldstein of Monroe Distributing, Dick George of Roy George Music, and Jim Hayes of Gem Music.

formative. In fact, the consensus was that it could very easily have gone another hour.

Rowe's Joel Friedman told the group that "we need an orderly transition from 45s to CDs. If we don't see that happening, it will be harmful to the industry."

He pointed out that operators can't finance an overnight collapse of 45s. However, whether or not operators want 45s, "the economics of 45s for record companies is not what it used to be." Friedman stressed that it is more important than ever to know your locations. "With vinyl, if you make a mistake it's a $1.35 mistake; with CDs it's a $13 mistake."

Friedman then added that CDs are causing us to think artist. The record companies hope to get five or six hit songs off of one CD, but Friedman cautions operators to beware of the one-hit wonders, where one song is the whole CD.

Bob Hesch of Rock-Ola noted that the record companies are working on reducing the cost of CDs. "When the price of CDs goes down, more operators will get into it. The record manufacturers are working on it," he said.

Paul Scribner of Pioneer agreed that CDs are here to stay. He describes profitability as a method of doing something that is inevitable; CDs are where the profit is for record manufacturers.

He agreed with the others that the industry must have a smooth transition including moving from the current equipment to new equipment hardware. Paul also described why Pioneer is trying to introduce a compilation disc that would have the current top hits on one disc. "It's in the best interest of the operator to control costs. With this compilation disc, he will be able to do that," he said.

NSM's Rus Strahan pointed out that operators are really selling time on jukeboxes. He also noted that a song on a 45 may be just three minutes, where on a CD it could be 14 minutes. "If you have increased your price per play to one for 25-cents/three for $1, you have only increased your price per play eight-and-a-third cents. So if the playing time is double, you don't come out ahead."

Wally Bohrer talked about the new jukebox license agreement and Record

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At the P.M.I. booth are, (l-r): Edward Twiss, Mike Silverstein, and Ron Guyer.

The panel for the jukebox seminar, (standing, l-r): Ed Adlum of RePlay, Paul Scribner of Pioneer, Bob Hesch of Rock-Ola, and Wally Bohrer of AMOA. (Sitting, l-r): Ted Howell of Mobile Records, AMOA record liaison Sam Atchley, NSM's Rus Strahan, and Rowe's Joel Friedman.

At the exhibit hall, (l-r): Larry VanBrackle, Jim Stansfield, Tom Elum, and Phil Elum.

Source International (RSI). Wally agreed with the others that there will come a day when 45s will no longer be readily available from the record companies, but operators need 45s now. "Maybe it's a little like rearranging the chairs on the Titantic," he said of RSI. "We felt, though, that we had to do something for our industry to make sure we had a continuing supply of 45s. We are harnessing our buying power."

Wally added that they have talked with 35 one-stops to see how they feel about RSI. "Five wanted to know what the problem was, three see us as competition, and 11 think it's a great idea."

Sam Atchley, the record label liaison for AMOA and RSI said, "RSI is enabling us to have control over our own destiny." He added that AMOA is working on promotions and marketing ideas to draw attention to jukeboxes.

Ted Howell of Mobile Record Service said that none of the six major manufacturers of 45s have said they will discontinue manufacturing 45s in the near future. He told operators, "You will have 45s as long as you need them."

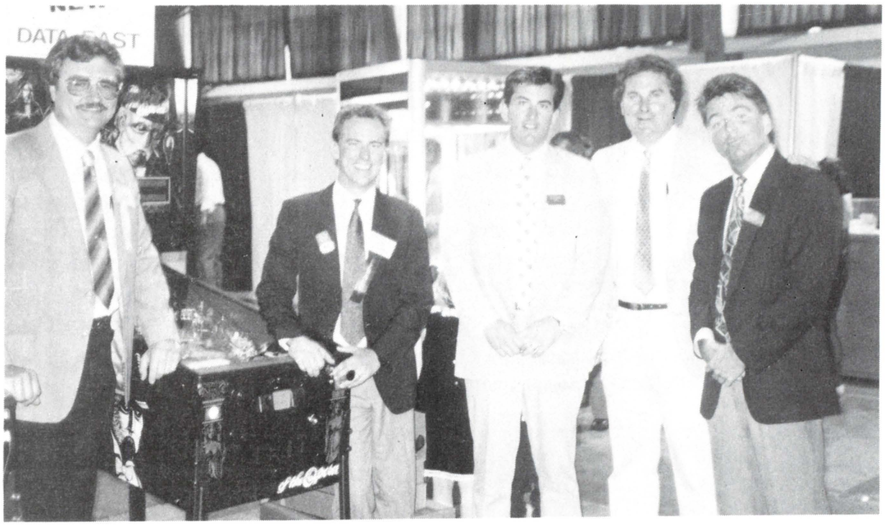
Ted highlighted the songs on Billboard's Top 100 chart that are available in 45s. "Of the top 100 songs in the country, there are only 50 that you would want to buy. If a song doesn't get on the Top 20, you don't need it on a jukebox."

Operator Bob Badgley wanted to know if the reports of 45 obsolescence was a "Chicken Little" story. The panel agreed that the transition period will be five to seven years.

Successful route management

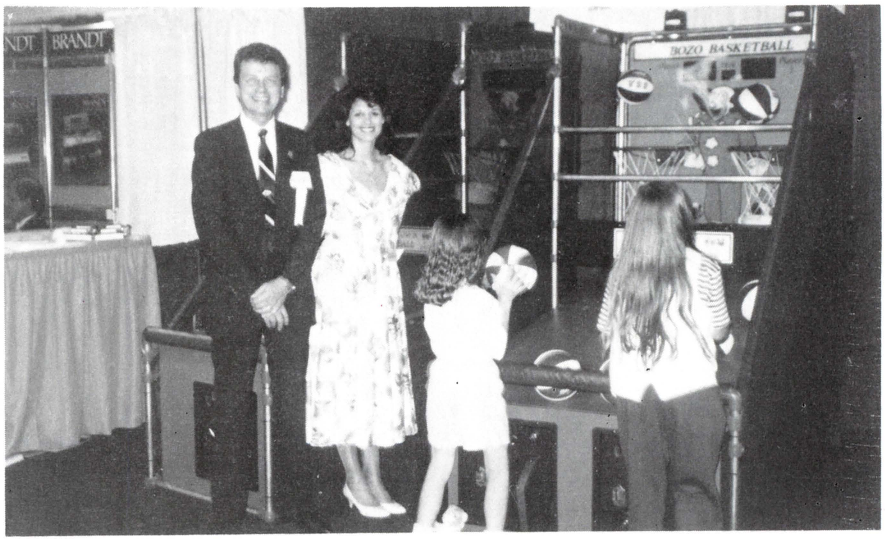
Dick George, Roy George Music & Vending, told the audience that operators are having to manage not only their own employees but their customer base as well. "Liquor licensed establishments are depending on us more than ever. The equipment is here; we have to learn how to take advantage of it by using contracts, negotiating better pricing and commissions, and establishing leagues."

Jim Stansfield of Stansfield Vending said that operators must customize their service. He recounted a story of a location owner who smoked big cigars and ate Twinkies. Jim made sure that the man

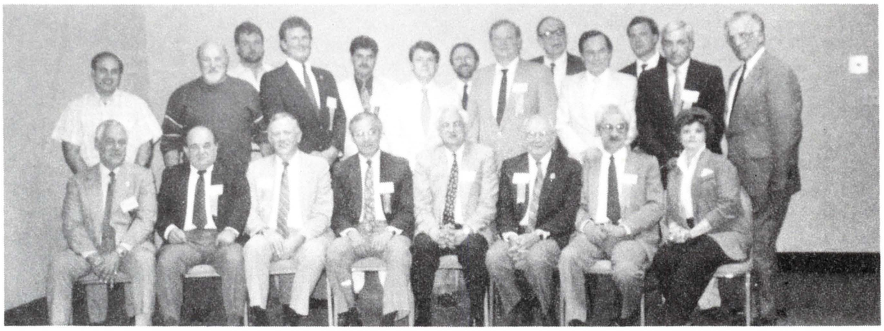


(L-r): Shaffer's Bob Francis, Data East's Pete Gustafson, Sega's Jim Vanderhoof, Shaffer's Bob Miller, and Dynamo's Chris Brady.

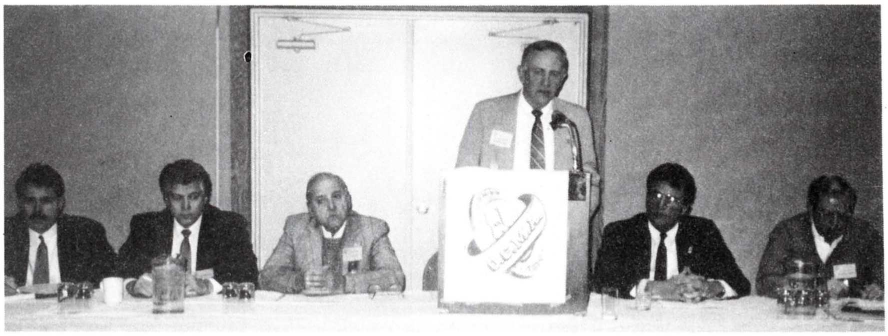
Classic Wood Design's Cheryl Tracey is flanked by, (l-r): Cleveland Coin's Bob Muniak and Doug Shipley and Tim Dwyer.



Mike and Dianne Seibert of Design Plus watching youngsters play *Bozo Basketball.*



OCMA's board of directors with AMOA president Jack Kerner (on the far left in front). OCMA executive director Judy Martin and executive vice president Paul Corey are on the far right.



The panel for the route management seminar, (l-r): Ric Rochetti, Marty Glazman, Larry Berke, Dick George, Jim Hayes, and Jim Stansfield.

always had a hefty supply of both.

Jim added that he believes the industry is on an upside. He said that he has 24 percent of his pool table locations on 75-cent play and it is working out very well. "We must be aggressive, know our businesses, and make adjustments when necessary," he said.

Ric Rochetti of Taito told operators that they should be conscious about targeting games to locations. "If you have a game in the proper location, you will be able to adjust your price per play. A dollar doesn't mean as much in a bar location as it does in an arcade," he noted.

Marty Glazman of Williams told operators that they must recognize what our business is and who our competition is. "Remember when every kid in America had to have a $250 bomber jacket? Parents were buying them and that took dollars away from our games. That's where our competition is," he pointed out. "Anytime money is spent on fads or other types of entertainment, it is taking away from coin-op entertainment."

Larry Berke of Jaleco stressed communication at all levels. He added that operators should be very attentive to keeping their games clean and operating well.

The audience pelted the panel with questions on topics such as advice on contacting location owners, security for employees, size of pool tables, and ways of collecting.

The manufacturers, as is usually the case, were asked questions about game design and quality. Marty took a beating over the ramps on some of the Williams games. He stressed that the company is very concerned about quality and urged operators to fill out the response card enclosed with their games. He also said that he would return any phone call from operators.

Marty also discussed some new ideas for pinball playfields that Williams is working on. Williams is working on perfecting a hardcoat that will be a welcome addition to Williams pins. He added that operators should make sure that their flipper rubbers are not too low. If they are they will launch the ball instead of bringing it down.

Other events

At the general membership meeting, OCMA presented a check for $8,000--representing the profits from the state dart tournament. A check for $500 was presented to Mike Ferraro of Make Room Columbus, an organization to aid the homeless.

In lieu of a banquet, the group converged on Scioto Downs for "A Night at the Track." A dinner was served while operators, manufacturers, distributors, and press tried their luck on the harness races for the evening. ☐

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Entertainment complexes open down South

Success breeds success, or so the saying goes. In the case of Celebration Station, a new string of entertainment complexes opening down South, the success story centers on the popularity of redemption. The first Celebration Station opened in Merrillville, Ind., with a family-style pizza restaurant that expanded, adding miniature golf and then an arcade.

According to Jeff Morton, general manager, ''Once we established the success of this combination we decided to keep going. Basically, our concept is family entertainment—that's our market—offering lots of prize redemption games and a nice clean atmosphere.

''We include party facilities for birthdays and groups. Right now we've had a tremendous response for parties; we're booked for the next two months. The party age group varies from 4-year-olds to 16-year-olds.''

There is no set format for Celebration Station locations; each features a unique design and amusement game mix that reflects the entertainment needs of the particular market. At the Baton Rouge location, for example, there was an existing building to work with and enough land for three go-cart tracks (kiddie, slick, and quarter-mile), miniature golf, and bumper boats, which are planned for spring 1991.

"Each one of the locations will have its own distinctive feeling," said Morton. "All the game rooms are custom designed to meet the master plan for that site."

In Baton Rouge the arcade is 5,000 square feet. There's one inside party room; outside party facilities are slated for the future. The exterior of the building looks like an old-time train station.

What's the inventory like at this first Deep South site? Customers first see the 25-foot-long redemption counter featuring everything from very small prizes up to the extra-large. Plush items are top quality and of a timely nature, indicated by the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle assortment.

Morton says he wants every customer to walk out with something. "We like to see the customers get lots of tickets," he professes. Ticket value is one cent each, the current industry standard. There are some premium prizes such as a bicycle and a selection of super-size plush that customers can save for.

Redemption equipment includes a combination of *Skee-Ball, Big Mouth, Boom Ball, Knock Down, Water Race, Bozo's Grand Prize Game, Roll-Down, Roll-A-Ball, Can Alley, Whac-A-Mole, Pop-A-Shot* basketball, and the *Klondike* coin pusher.

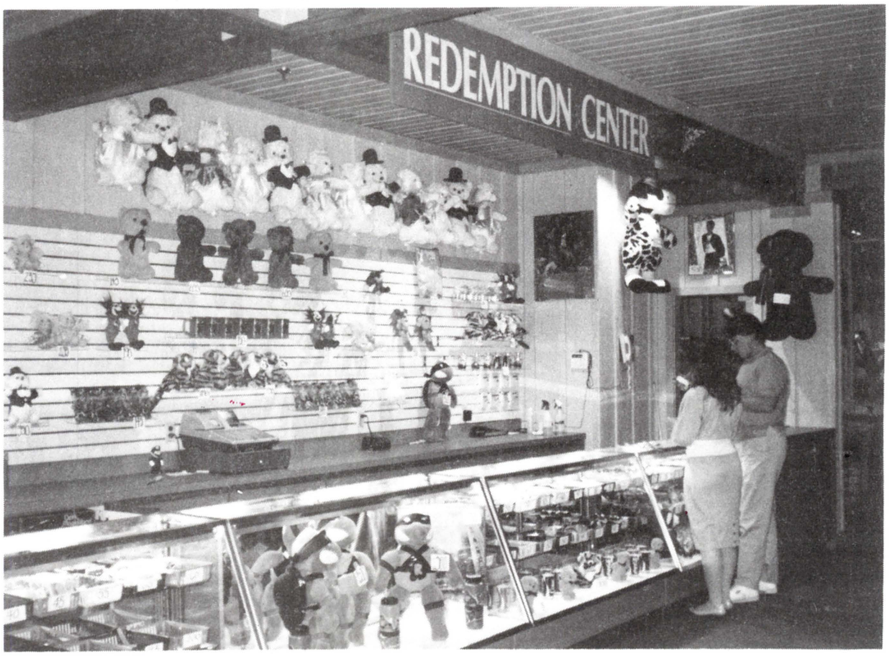
Among the other game choices are 27 videos, two *Tournament Soccer*, two *Lotto Fun*, one double crane, and one air hockey. Conspicuously missing are pinball games and a jukebox. Morton said, "In our inventory we have only one or two pinball games. For the maintenance and the amount of play we've received on them, we stay away."

The Merrillville location may convert a portion of the store into a 50s diner with a jukebox. It's a wait-and-see situation on further use of jukeboxes, which to an outsider appears perfect for group parties.

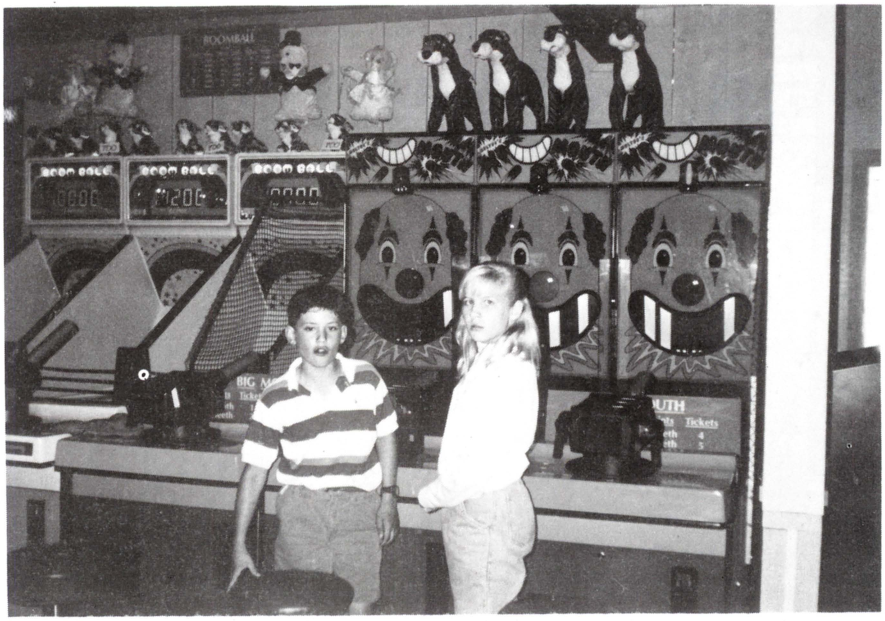
Speaking of parties, as a bonus to party groups, Celebration Station offers the usual $10 roll of 40 tokens for a bargain price of $7. Most games operate on tokens (four for $1), although some do take quarters. All tokens and tickets have the Celebration Station logo. Occasional token promotions appear in the local newspaper.

Celebration Station adheres to one goal, that of marketing itself to the family. "We used to be in the children business," said Morton, "but found we were limiting ourselves to a certain market. Expanding our entertainment choices allowed us to bring in the date crowd."

The Merrillville Celebration Station did so well that the parent company, Whiteco



The 25-foot-long redemption center at Celebration Station's Baton Rouge, La., location.



Players of all ages like *Knock Down* and *Boom Ball.*

Industries, opened the first extension of its concept in Baton Rouge, La., this spring. Expansion plans include a Houston, Texas, location opening this month; a Clearwater, Fla., site with a September start-up date; and a 1991 opening in Charlotte, N.C.

The size of the Baton Rouge location is an attraction in itself; there are no formal signs as yet. The miniature golf course is well lit at night and can be easily seen from a distance. Dignified directional billboards are planned for the interstate. Says Morton, "We don't want the glitzy look. We build our locations so that they are a sign in themselves."

Unique miniature golf layouts are a hallmark of Celebration Station. Morton explained, "Our main goal in designing our miniature golf areas is achieving a park-like setting, not the traditional miniature golf course. We want to make it more challenging and relaxing at the same time." The Merrillville location follows an 1890s gold rush theme featuring a 35-foot mountain with cascading waterfall.

Whiteco Industries does a great deal of market research before committing to a new site. "We consider the people in the area and the competition when we are in the planning stages," stated Morton. "We help support the communities we select for locations."

> ***"We like to see the customers get lots of tickets."***

Baton Rouge is home to Louisiana State University and its LSU Tigers. Visitors to Celebration Station see a giant tiger on the miniature golf course as they pull into the parking area. Details such as these matter to the local population.

Celebration Station offers a full-blown snack bar with all the popular foods such as pizza, hot dogs, popcorn, and soft drinks. With a variety of game choices indoors and out, and favorite snacks available, customers can find everything they want day or night.

As general manager, Morton is involved in the early establishment of each new location. Whiteco officers Craig White, vice president, and Terry Werts, director of operations, started Celebration Station. They continue to direct its future from the Indiana home office.

Since the Merrillville and Baton Rouge locations are vastly different in appearance, what will the new Houston site look like? For one thing, it will feature a section of the arcade dedicated to games for very young children. We'll just have to be patient and see how the rest of the stores unfold. White, Werts, and Morton have done a fine job of formulating family fun centers that give the public a positive feeling about our industry. ☐

KLONDIKE
PLEASE USE TOKENS ONLY

A group of youngsters by the ticket-dispensing single coin pusher, *Klondike*.

THE CLOWN
GRAND PRIZE GAME

A father and son at *Bozo's Grand Prize Game*.

READER'S RESPONSE

OPERATORS: This column is devoted to you. It is your chance to have your voice heard on the state of the industry. We welcome all complaints, compliments, and comments. We will print your letters as received, when possible. We would appreciate it if you would refrain from sending a scathing letter about a specific manufacturer. Instead, we would like your general observations on the industry. Your name will not be used if you prefer. Take a few moments to share your thoughts with the rest of the coin-operated entertainment industry. There is a self-addressed sheet waiting for you to fill out and return to us.

I want to see it first!

I have a question for you. When, if ever, are you going to put your magazine in an envelope or at least in a sleeve? The way it is now, everyone and his brother can read my mail before me. I know you want as many people as possible to read it, regardless of whether they are involved in our business or not. However, instead of giving them the opportunity to read my magazine, why don't you sell them a subscription? But you should know that it's not good to tell everyone how much games cost, how much they earn, etc.

I want to congratulate you on the excellent job you have been doing. In the last six months the magazine has been out on time—with better articles to boot. Keep up the good work.

Also, I am very glad to see your next ACME show will be in Las Vegas. Las Vegas is a great town for a convention. You can stay in a beautiful room for one-third the price of a room in Chicago. Plus you can eat and drink for almost free. You don't need cabs because the weather is always beautiful—not like Chicago. You can walk or drive without getting ripped off. It should be somewhere different each year. How about Orlando, San Diego, Myrtle Beach, Dallas, Denver—anywhere but Chicago.

Also, please keep the show dates on a Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, not Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. We like to bring our key people; if it is a mid-week show, I lose them for the whole week. Keep it how you have it now.

Suburban, Ill.

I would like to assure you that although we do want as many industry people as

(Continued)

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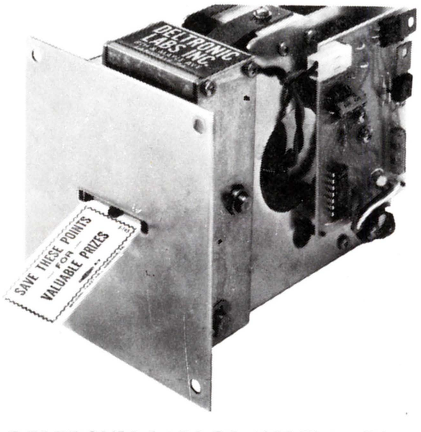

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AND NOW . . .
A WORD FROM OUR READERS!!!

An operator challenged us to provide space and invite everyone in the coin machine business to write about what is right, wrong, or can be corrected within the industry. OK, here's the space. Now it's up to all of you to fill it with comments on the industry. We will not print your name if you so request, but we will print your comments just as you have them. The operator suggested running the page for three issues, but we will leave it indefinitely if you continue to send your opinions.

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possible to read our magazine, we are very staunch on not wanting outsiders to have subscriptions. I can't imagine why the mailman or postal workers would take the time to read your Play Meter. We have on many occasions turned down multiple subscriptions from chains of locations because we felt it would be in conflict with operators.

We do not feel that locations need to see the magazine and do not solicit them for subscriptions. As far as sending it in an envelope, that is an option you can take advantage of. We normally mail second-class, which has a stiff set of rules attached.

However, for an additional $20, you can have the magazine sent first-class. It will be sent in an envelope. I might add that many familiar publications, such as Time and TV Guide, are sent second-class mail and do not come in an envelope or a sleeve.

As for your other comments, many thanks for telling us. We have worked hard to put out a publication that is not full of fluff and without substance. If you, or any operators, have suggestions on articles they would like to see, please drop us a line.

Redemption is going to be big

Please, no more crummy video games. Operators can't take it anymore. We are sick and tired of buying video games that never make enough money to pay for themselves. Manufacturers are either real dumb or real smart. They think they are being smart in believing that operators will buy and buy any and all video games they put on the market. Whether it's awful or not doesn't matter as long as they make their money.

On the other hand, they are dumb to think that it will always be that way. I am only one operator in this country, but I can tell you that I have drastically changed the way I buy equipment —especially video games. I don't buy very many brand new ones. I am waiting for it to prove itself first. Sure, I realize that I may miss out on an occasional hit, but there aren't many of them, so I win in the long run.

Redemption is making me money right now. I was glad to see your magazine feature some articles on redemption. You are good about keeping on top of the issues for operators. Please keep those articles coming, because we need all the information we can get.

I may be repeating myself, but the redemption articles were at the request of an operator who wanted to know a little more about the subject. Operators are the ones we write articles for; we appreciate any suggestions. Any operator who has been wanting to see an article on a certain topic shouldn't keep it to himself—let us know. □

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Serious dart players compete in Team Dart V

The Sahara Hotel in Las Vegas hosted the AMOA-NDA Team Dart V international championship for the second consecutive year, as 2,000 competitors lined up for three days of serious electronic darts on May 2-5. Cash awards, trophies, and plaques totaling $39,700 were given to teams in eight different categories.

In the span of a few short years the AMOA-NDA team event has grown to epic proportions. Statistics for 1990 versus 1989 show a dramatic increase of 113 teams in one calendar year.

Competition took place on 165 electronic dart games provided by Arachnid, Merit Industries, and Valley Recreation Products— three manufacturer member/sponsors. Players represented 25 states and four foreign countries (Canada, Japan, France, and Germany). Banquet attendance rose from 495 in 1989 to 750 this year.

The excitement level was highest during the finals competition, especially in the Open Division Masters. Play involved 501 double in/double out in a round robin format, then a double elimination that went into a tie-breaker and took players well past the start of the banquet hour.

In addition to team award announcements, the banquet was also the occasion to honor Tony Urso of Madison Coin Machine in Monona, Wis., for his service as association president. Ed Schultz of Ed's Distributing in Lansing,

Back row, (l-r): Jack Houriet of Merit, Tom Dennis of SoCal Darts in Long Beach, Calif., Glenn Remick, Mike Gannon, and Mort Ansky of Merit. In front: Brande Eller of Dynamic Darts in San Diego and Peter Feuer of Merit.

Craig Dumdei (l) of C & N Sales in Mankato, Minn., with Cindy and Bob Moore of American Amusement Arcades in Minneapolis.

Mich., received the association's first Meritorious Service Award. New board members were announced, including Joel McClung of Derrick Music in Charleston, W.Va., Mike Smythe of Indy Amusements in Indianapolis, and Mike Hawkins of D & R Novelty in Rochester, Minn.

The banquet concluded with a comedy act and a magic show, which featured a high level of audience participation and good-natured joking with attendees.

Organizing and administering an event of this magnitude requires untold man hours. Heading the list of tireless workers are Tony Urso, association president, and Joe Conway, association director (a true unsung hero). Kirk McKennon served as national tournament director, ably assisted by his wife Jody.

Joining McKennon were staff members Bob Moore, Jeff Neumann, Craig Dumdei, Jerry Borth, Sharon Steburg, Butch Myers, Dave Warner, Dan Telshaw, Rick Meyer, Mike Sarver, Dawn Orloff, Mike Smythe, Steve Davis, Mark Helmer, Pete Di Nicola, Mike Hawkins, Cindy Lynch, Rose King, Glenn Remick, Tim O'Connor, Debbie Davis, Randy Lindbloom, and Char Reierson.

Other helpers included Darren Black, Dennis Havner, Dave Schultz, Roe Carson, Ellie Jordan, Carol Cannon, Louise Riesing, and Dave Kristal.

Following is a list of winning teams and their sponsors:

Open Masters: 1st—Keller Lake (Dahlco Music & Vending) of Minnesota, 2nd—Bud Light (Darts N Such) of California, 3rd—Triple Nickel (Quality Amusement) of Oregon, 4th—Pike's Plaza (Indy Amusement) of Indiana.

Open A: 1st—Alexander's (Tee Kee Tee) of Arizona, 2nd—MacArthur Park (Tee Kee Tee) of Arizona, 3rd—Dart Vaders (Darts N Stuff) of Canada, 4th—Faze In/Good Ques. (Red's Nov.) of Wisconsin.

Open B: 1st—Terminators (Indy Amusement) of Indiana, 2nd—Roy's (Green Amusement) of Kentucky, 3rd—Red Rooster (Dahlco Music & Vending) of Minnesota, 4th—Randall Liquor (Active Coin) of Minnesota.

DART
ASSOCIATION

Second place winners in Open Masters: Bud Light of California.

NATIONAL
DART
ASSOCIATION

Winners of the Best Dressed Team: Our Place Irish Pub.

Happy first place winners in Open Masters—Keller Lake. From left: Tom Tanberg Jr., Blake Hendrickson, Doug Bladow, Rick Brinkman, and Lane Helgeson.

Open C: 1st—B & D Darts (B & B Darts) of California, 2nd—Alexanders (Tee Kee Tee) of Arizona, 3rd—Darts Alpha (Darts Alpha) of Illinois, 4th—Players (Certified Hawaiian) of Hawaii.

Women's A: 1st—Scoreboard (Just Darts) of Indiana, 2nd—Cinderella (Amusement Devices) of Wisconsin, 3rd—Bullfighters (Tee Kee Tee) of Arizona, 4th—Silver Trails (Star Service) of California.

Women's B: 1st—Sports Forum (Star World) of Michigan, 2nd—Wells Liquor (C & N Sales) of Minnesota, 3rd—Diamond Ladies (Variety Entertainment) of Indiana, 4th—Darts N Stuff (Darts N Stuff) of Canada.

Mixed Couples A: 1st—Cinderella (Amusement Devices) of Wisconsin, 2nd—Northern Tropics (Amusement Devices) of Wisconsin, 3rd—Our Place (Allstar Music) of Illinois, 4th— Sharpshooters (Precision Darts) of Tennessee.

Mixed Couples B: 1st—Bakers With No Dough (Dynamic Darts) of California, 2nd—Pikes Plaza Sure Shots (Indy Amusement) of Indiana, 3rd—Dudley's Dartrights (Madison Coin) of Wisconsin, 4th—Pine Restaurant (Variety Entertainment) of Indiana.

As a fitting tribute to all the players, Joe Conway stated: "There were no losers, just teams that ran out of matches." ☐

First place winners in the Women's A: Scoreboard of Indiana.

Dave Schultz of Arachnid by the new *6300 T*.

Cinderella team members Linda Bonneville (l) and Natalie Hanson with Mort Ansky of Merit.

Tony Urso (l) and Joe Conway go over team standings.

Butch Enochs of Saginaw, Mich., joins Kathy Wilkerson of Sacramento, Calif., on the dart sidelines

Tim O'Connor of Dahlco Music & Vending in St. Paul, Minn., with Red Rooster team members Bonnie Marshall (l) and Jodee Hedberg.

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Darts draw interest on international level

While electronic dart leagues have grown steadily here in the United States, the sport has also enjoyed success in Germany, Japan, Canada, and France. The international scope is due to enlarge soon as Spain and New Zealand plan to establish leagues and send teams to the 1991 AMOA-NDA Team Dart VI.

Representatives from Spain and New Zealand attended Team Dart V as observers this year and came away filled with enthusiasm. New Zealanders Colin Thomson and Tony Conder are particularly high on darts. ''There's nothing to compare to it in New Zealand,'' said Thomson at the Team Dart V banquet. ''It's a whole new sport for our country.''

Thomson and Conder appeared anxious to return home to launch a dart program. Their company is named Tavern Sports New Zealand Ltd. Until a few short months ago they were not familiar with the sport. But after learning about darts, carefully researching their home market and identifying the opportunities, they are ready to get started.

According to Thomson, ''We were looking for something to boost tavern patronage on the typically slow nights of Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. This is our first time seeing electronic darts in action. It's confirmed everything we thought it could do. Our players will love coming over here for the competition next year.''

In the past, most of New Zealand's trading has been with Great Britain. Now there is a desire to tie the Pacific area together, and New Zealand will trade more with the United States.

Thomson and Conder will start with 12 electronic dart games and establish a test market plan. Next comes the administration of league programs. They will be acting as distributor and operator back home.

Said Conder, ''We see the game being very popular and we want to be sure we have the organization working correctly before the demand takes over.''

Representatives from other countries were enthusiastic in their support of electronic darts and the AMOA-NDA. Here is a sampling of comments:

Canada: ''Look forward to seeing more red maple leaves represented next year.''

Spain: ''It has been a pleasure to observe this event. We look forward to bringing a team from Spain next year.''

France: ''On behalf of all French players, thank you for your hospitality and friendship.''

Japan: ''We're so happy to be here. We want to express thanks for your warm hospitality and hope to bring more teams next year.''

Germany: ''This is our second time in Las Vegas. To the American people, thank you for such a nice time. We can't find words for all that you do for us.'' ☐

"Super 6" Plus II

New Zealanders Colin Thomson (l) and Tony Conder (r) flank Chuck Milhem, president of Valley Recreation Products, at Team Dart V.

Merit's Sunshine Classic

Dart enthusiasts from Florida, Tennessee, Illinois, and New York arrived in Clearwater, Fla., in late April for Merit's World Series of Darts $6,000 Sunshine Classic. The third annual event, held at the Belleview Biltmore Resort Hotel, was co-sponsored by Birmingham Vending of Orlando and Gulf Coast Music of Clearwater.

The Biltmore Hotel is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as the largest occupied wooden structure in the world. It boasts two golf courses, 17 tennis courts, an indoor/outdoor pool, a private beach, and a 13,000-square-foot ballroom—the site of the tournament. ''We were extremely fortunate to go into a resort area and find such a fabulous hotel,'' said tournament director Glenn Remick.

Here are the final results from the Sunshine Classic:

Men's Singles: 1st place: Victor Martin; 2nd place: Mark Hamilton; 3rd place: Randy Goins.

Women's Singles: 1st place: Paula Murphy; 2nd place: Georgette Blodgett; 3rd place: Albie Rashid.

Four Person Team: 1st place: Wayne Roewer, Judy Roewer, Mark Hamilton, and Brian Ulerick; 2nd place: Bob Stevens, Bill Mutter, Peter Dion, and Jimmy Sullivan; 3rd place: Tom Johnson, Pat Hewitt, Gene Alexander, and Jim Newbill.

Mixed Triples: 1st place: Tom Johnson, Pat Hewitt, and Debbie Sweggman; 2nd place: Bob Mattson, Brian Ulerick, and Diana Richardson; 3rd place: Dave Moody, Randy Goins, and Patti Carson.

Draw Doubles: 1st place: Wayne Roewer and Howard Brigance; 2nd place: Tom Johnson and Andrew Raspin; 3rd place: Stan Trin and Frank Boring.

Women's Draw: 1st place: Patti Carson and Albie Rashid; 2nd place: Judy Roewer and Kara Spurlin; 3rd place: Carol Fisher and Toni Deau. ☐

Patti Carson (l) and Albie Rashid, first place finishers in the Women's Draw event.

Stan Trin (l) and Frank Boring came in third in the Draw Doubles category.

Irving Blackman

The next generation of family businesses

American business is graying. It is estimated that over one million entrepreneurs started businesses after returning home from World War II. These successful businesses are now being transferred to the kids of those ex-servicemen.

How do I know? The seminars that I give on succession are pulling larger audiences. But more importantly, owners of family businesses are calling my office, consulting, then implementing plans to transfer the businesses to their kids.

One question is central to all transfer plans: what is your business worth? Whether your transfer plan is a sale of the business to the kids, a gift, a redemption, or some other method or combination of lifetime transfer methods, the same big question stands tall. The question does not change if you want to transfer all or part of the business after death.

Since the business is almost always the biggest dollar-value asset of a family business owner, its value is critical to both the transfer plan and estate plan. I still find this hard to believe, but the following are facts, based on my experience of working with hundreds of business owners through the years.

* About five percent of them really know what their business is worth (usually the result of an appraisal).

* About 50 percent greatly over-value their business.

* And about 45 percent use book value (rarely the right method) as the measure of the business' worth.

You wouldn't set the price on an item or service you were about to sell until you determined the cost. The same logic applies to developing a transfer-your-business plan. The fair market value of your business dictates the potential estate tax cost. The message is clear: you must know the cost. If you plan to sell or transfer your business, it's essential to have it appraised.

> *"If you plan to sell or transfer your business, it's essential to have it appraised."*

S corporations: the choice for long-term benefits

Giving tax seminars to closely held business owners is fun. They love to learn how to beat up the IRS—legitimately, of course. But this spring I was startled to learn that almost half of the owners in my seminar audience were making a wrong choice and letting the IRS beat *them* up with the extra taxes.

What was the wrong choice? Owners with an eye for short-term savings were electing the incorrect corporation status and suffering some long-term consequences. The most common error was remaining a C corporation when an S corporation was the tax-saving choice. Here's an example of the typical error.

Joe Owner was in a personal tax bracket of 28 percent, and his C corporation, J/O Inc., made $100,000 a year. This is how Joe figured he was saving money. J/O Inc. only paid tax of $22,250 on the $100,000 of income. If Joe had been an S corporation, he would have paid $28,000 (28 percent) on that same $100,000. The way Joe figured it, he was $5,750 ahead ($28,000 minus $22,250). And he was right—in the short run.

Joe told me he was going to sell his business in the next two to three years. When Joe sells, he will be clobbered by a second tax. Watch this: J/O Inc. had a $77,750 balance after paying its tax ($100,000 minus $22,250). When Joe takes this balance after selling the business, he must pay a second tax of $21,770 ($77,750 times 28 percent).

Now, his total tax as a C corporation was $44,020 ($22,250 plus $21,770). An S corporation would have cost him only $28,000, with no second tax. When the smoke clears, Joe's tax damages will total $16,020 ($44,020 minus $28,000) for that one year. Remember, Joe had incorrectly been a C corporation for many years.

TAX TIPS

I want every business owner reading this to review his corporation status (C or S) with his professional immediately. At a minimum, you must consider income and tax brackets (for yourself and the corporation), along with the possibility of a second tax.

Deductions for auto expenses

It's not often that I applaud the IRS or a new tax law. But today, there is a reason for applause. The IRS finally did something intelligent about deducting auto expenses. For many years, a taxpayer could figure his potential auto deduction two ways and use the method which gave the largest deduction.

One way (the regular method) is to keep track of actual auto expenses, including depreciation. The second way is known as the "optional mileage" method. It is much easier to figure your automobile deduction using this method. But there has always been one problem: the amount deductible was usually significantly lower than the regular-method number.

Well, here's the good news. Starting Jan. 1, 1990, new rules went into effect. The optional mileage rate is 26 cents per mile for every mile of business use. Under the old rules, the rates were 25-1/2 cents for the first 15,000 business miles driven, and 11 cents per mile after that. (See Revenue Procedure 89-66.)

What do you have to do to take advantage of the optional method? Just keep track of the business miles you travel—the miles, purpose, and date of each trip. Add 'em up and multiply by 26 cents.

There are two more expenses you can add to increase your deduction—the cost of parking and tolls. As a rule of thumb, if you drive more than 20,000 miles per year, you should make the computation using the optional method. Then, use the method—regular or optional—that gives you the larger deduction.

Transfer your business and still keep control

Do you own a closely held family business? If you do, I want an honest answer to the next question. Are you willing to turn over control of your business to one or more of your kids, and when? Five years? Ten?

After 35 years of working with successful owners who want to transfer their businesses to their children, I know one thing for sure. Almost all owners (about 19 out of 20, to be exact) are unwilling to give up legal voting control of their businesses until they retire completely or die. You are typical if that's the way you feel. You have plenty of good company.

The typical owner of a successful family business usually has two basic goals: transfer the business to the kids and pay as little in taxes as possible. Can he do it without giving up voting control, or is this an impossible dream?

Happily, the dream can be accomplished. But first you must get around some very technical law found in Section 2036 of the Internal Revenue Code. Either you beat this section of the law legitimately, or it will beat you. How? Say you sell or give your business to your kids over time so you can reduce your estate tax. If you violate Section 2036, the IRS will tax your business in your estate at its fair market value on the day you died, even though you had not owned the business for many years.

Here is a simple method that we use in our office to help a family business owner transfer his business, yet keep voting control. The owner turns all of his stock (common) into the corporation and takes back two types of common stock exchange—voting common (say 100 shares) and non-voting common (say 9,900).

This transaction is tax-free and works for both C corporations (tax-paying) and S corporations. The owner then sells or gives (the most often used method) the non-voting stock to his kids. The owner can own as little as one percent of all the stock (100 shares of voting stock) and still retain 100 percent of the voting control.

The above method satisfies Section 2036(b) fully. It will not violate Section 2036(c) if your professional properly leads you through a somewhat complex maze. It is essential to get a competent adviser to explain the traps, exceptions, and opportunities available in this difficult—yet very manageable--section of the law. ☐

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Boyd Franks

The 'lectronic genius

Editor's Note: Every business has its own brand of humor. You have to really live it to appreciate the funny stories. The coin-op amusement business is no exception, as the following article indicates. All readers are invited to send in a retelling of the humorous and/or bizarre happenings they encounter in daily business. Today's headache can turn into tomorrow's anecdote.

I have come across some very funny stories while traveling around the countryside repairing games for my many customers. Learning about a 'lectronic genius in a small town is just one of them.

While taking my wife shopping in a nearby city's mall, I stopped at the arcade to thank a friend for sending new customers my way. By contract, my friend was allowed to sell old games but not repair them. He passed my phone number on for repairs.

During our conversation my friend asked, "Can you fix a *Mata Hari?*" I said, "You can fix a *Mata Hari* as good as anyone. What's the deal?" He squirmed, got a funny look on his face, and told me the story.

Someone wanted a *Mata Hari* but my friend didn't have one at the time. He was told that the bowling center had one and perhaps he could negotiate a purchase. He went over, looked at the game, bought it, and later spent two hours trying to get it to power up.

"What did you find?" I asked him.

"You wouldn't believe it," was the reply. "I pulled the MPU board off and found the copper traces on the back side completely gone and replaced by *jumper wires!*"

"Jumper wires?" I asked incredulously.

"Yes, jumper wires," he reiterated. *All* of the traces had been replaced by jumper wires.

My response: "The chances of that board ever working again are probably zero."

His face fell. I wasn't telling him anything he didn't already know. I waved goodbye and headed out the door. I felt I had a hot new customer ready for repairs: the bowling center. I drove over and looked around inside. There were 19 games, 18 with "out of order" signs on them. Hot dog! Plenty of work for me.

I looked around and finally spied someone at the soda fountain. The boss was out of town, so I began giving my qualifications to the waitress. I was just about to render my phone number.

"We don't need n-o-o-o body," she said, in a country drawl that strongly suggested a straw between her teeth, cow manure between her toes, and ignorance that the Civil War had ended.

"Oh, really," I said. "Who fixes the games for you?"

"We got us a 'lectronic genius," she explained.

Visions of a super technician danced around in my head. Someone had beat me to this location. "How old is he?" I inquired.

"Sixteen," came the answer.

Sixteen! A super brain...a child prodigy...an Einstein. "Where did he get his training?" I asked.

"He's gonna take it in Vo-Tech next year," she replied.

Visions of a super technician instantly vanished from my head, replaced by the image of a pimply faced kid who was wet behind the ears and probably as smart as a rock. The repair job was in the bag!

"How long has he been working here?" I asked.

"Six weeks," she said.

I cringed and shuddered. He had been there just long enough to booger up every piece of equipment in sight. I decided against leaving my number. I didn't want to touch those games with a ten foot pole. Not after that kid has a six week start. *And now for the kicker.*

Six months later, I was installing a kit for a customer with a convenience store about 12 miles from the bowling center. A 12-year-old youngster began watching me with total fascination. He was hooked on electronics and intrigued by the innards of the game. I knew that he would become one of us. I encouraged him by handing over some transistors and other parts for him to look at.

"Boy, I sure wish I had one of those," he said, pointing to a circuit board.

"Wish I had one I could give you," I said. I had some scrap boards at home but none with me. The conversation with the boy continued as the work on the conversion progressed. Then the kid sat bolt upright.

"I know where I can get one!" he blurted out. "The bowling center! There's a *mountain* of them stacked up behind the building."

I drove across the river and 12 miles out of my way just to see for myself. Sure enough, there behind the bowling center was a monument to the 'lectronic genius. It was a two-story pile of games, which had originally been worth several hundred thousand dollars, sitting in the rain. ☐

Boyd Franks has 30 years of experience in the field of electronics. He currently operates the Video Repair School in Glen, Miss.

The New Standard

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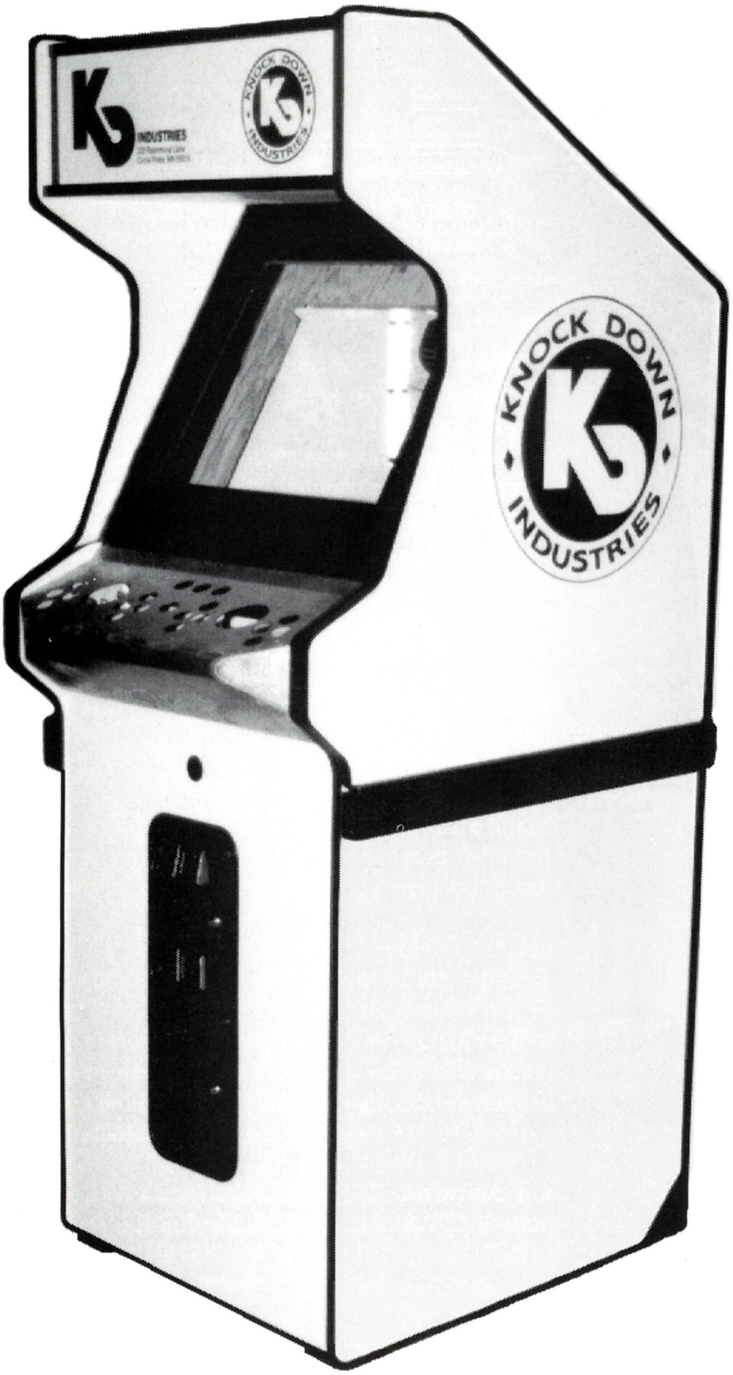

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MERCHANDISE MARKET

Bonnie Theard

When you're hot, you're hot!

If you were asked to name two of the hottest items going today, which ones would you choose? T-shirts proclaiming "Dan Quayle for president in '96"? Plastic mugs with the image of Elvis emblazoned on the front?

Nah. Try baseball cards and *anything* having to do with The Simpsons, TV's irreverent cartoon character family in need of an attitude adjustment. Both are now available, in various forms, as crane and redemption merchandise.

Baseball card shops are popping up all over the place. It has become the "in" thing on most school campuses (elementary and junior high level) to lug binders full of baseball cards to school daily for bragging and trading.

I myself have been besieged by constant requests to stop by Frank's Baseball Card Shop or Fielder's Choice, where a quick look-see usually results in a large expenditure. It's no wonder that some enterprising person hasn't yet capitalized on the resurrected hobby of baseball card collecting.

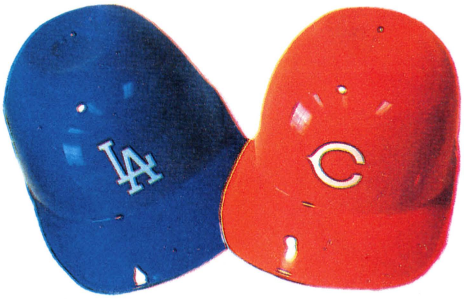
Now someone has. **Marco Specialties** offers a baseball helmet assortment (all teams) filled with the popular brands of cards from *Topps, Don Russ,* and *Fleer*. Pricing is $1.25 each helmet for one to six dozen, $1.15 each helmet for seven to 11 dozen, and $1.05 each helmet for over 12 dozen.

There's also a baseball card mini-album, the Pocket Pro-File. Pricing is $1.45 each album for one to six dozen, $1.35 each album for seven to 11 dozen, and $1.25 each album for over 12 dozen. For more information, call Marco Specialties (800) 322-8458.

WATCH IT, DUDE
SUCK
SUCK
SUCK
MAGGIE SIMPSON

Barry Larkin

Baseball
CARDS



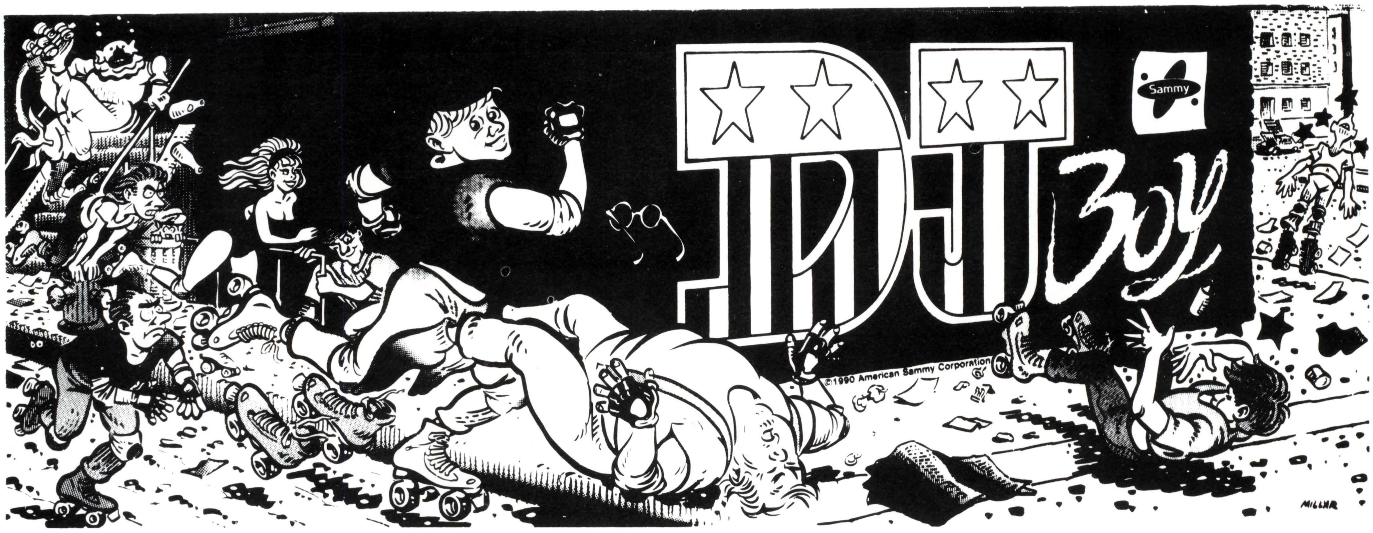
Bonita Marie International now offers a full line of jewelry depicting The Simpsons. Included are 12 different pendants and five styles of licensed cartoon pins (three to five inches wide) featuring Bart and his whole misguided family. Pins are perfect for the company's peanut capsule, rotary dishes, and open box jewelry systems. Or try the complete 96-piece redemption rack with each pin on a card that slides on its own holder.

In addition, Bonita Marie also has a collection of 12 styles of Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle (TMNT) pendants. These are hand-painted, measure two inches wide, and come on a gold chain 18 inches long.

Free color posters of both The Simpsons and TMNT are available for display on the back mirrors of cranes. The Simpsons items are licensed through 20th Century Fox Film Corp.; TMNT items are licensed through Mirage Studios. For more information, call Bonita Marie International (800) 272-6375.

Any merchandise suppliers who wish to submit entries for the August issue should send them in by July 1. All suppliers are invited to participate; there is no charge and no limit to the number of entries per year. This is a service for our operator subscribers. ☐

"THIS GAME IS HIP, WHAT A TRIP! THAT DJ BOY IS ON A ROLL!"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Frank Seninsky

The *Perfect 360* solid-state joystick

I recently had the opportunity to test a new, revolutionary solid-state joystick, the *Perfect 360*. A few years ago I had worked with what I incorrectly thought was a similar unit and found it overpriced, although it worked much better than a mechanical joystick. The *Perfect 360* not only performed exceptionally well, but I was pleasantly surprised to find that it costs about the same as a mechanical joystick.

Operators know that joystick controls frequently don't operate as intended. The 20 moving parts in a mechanical joystick are subject to wear, abuse (misalignment), and oxidation, all of which create an increase in resistance. When game players experience erratic control, they quickly look for a new game to play.

How many times have you pulled in a low-earning game, replaced the joystick control(s), put the game out in a different location, and magically found that revenues significantly increased? Sounds like this is what we do for a living, doesn't it?

How it works

Instead of switch contacts, the *Perfect 360* uses optical means to simulate actual switch openings and closings. This is accomplished by using frequency-matched photoelectric emitter/detector pairs. The light path is blocked by a bushing without any actual physical contact with the joystick control shaft. The life expectancy of these components is more than 11-1/2 years (100,000 hours).

When the four logic ports of a joystick (up, down, left, right) are in their neutral position, they are electrically resting at +5 volts (high logic state). Moving the joystick in one direction will close a set of contacts connecting it to ground or 0 volts (low logic state). The game's computer will then sense this transition from a logic "high" to a logic "low" and will initiate the move (left, right, up, or down).

In this new control, when the light path between a pair of emitter/detectors is blocked by the joystick shaft, the corresponding switching component inside is triggered to conduct and pull down the particular logic port to a voltage level that is low enough for the computer to sense it as a logic "low" state.

Ideally, it should be zero volts or absolute ground, but not necessarily. The sample tested, which is an improved, second generation design intended to fit the more demanding logic level requirements of recent games, was able to pull down the control ports of our *Double Dragon* game to about .08 volts. This is low enough to be sensed as a logic "low" state by the game computer.

It is worth mentioning that the same cannot be said for the earlier version of this device, which was rated at a pull down level of 0.8 volts. The 0.8 volts may theoretically be sufficient for games using TTL technology, but it is borderline. In actual cases, this value varies according to each individual game's I-O circuitry. This is where we made a modification for the manufacturer, and Version Two now corrects for all the cases we could think of. The manufacturer now claims that all future controls will be rated at less than .03 volts for the "low" state.

How we tested

A *Perfect 360* was installed (in about 10 minutes) on the left player's side of a *Double Dragon*, while a regular mechanical joystick was kept on the right player's side. All the shop techs and route collectors played two games, one using the right joystick and one using the left joystick.

Results

Each player described the left joystick (solid-state) as having faster response time and more accurate control. Operated as an eight-way, the diagonal moves were easier to locate than on the right joystick (regular).

Additional tests

1. We poured fine dust (three different kinds) underneath both joysticks. The regular one started failing erratically. To our surprise, the *Perfect 360's* performance wasn't affected at all.

2. We next poured some strong and nasty leftover coffee on both joysticks. Both

stopped working properly, as expected. After washing and wiping them dry, both worked again as if nothing had happened. The *Perfect 360* circuit board is mounted in a rugged plastic to protect the components and eliminate cross-talk between the X and Y axis. We cheated a bit with the coffee so the board would become saturated.

"When game players experience erratic control they quickly look for a new game to play."

The only significant manufacturer's claim that couldn't be verified experimentally was the life expectancy rating of 100,000 hours. My deadline cut the test short. I feel that if the sensor unit lasts a few years in perfect operating condition (which I believe it will), most operators would be very happy, myself included.

The *Perfect 360* comes as a kit, ready to retrofit into a standard WICO joystick. The electronic optic sensor unit is in one piece and snaps right into the clips that normally hold the four blade switches. Screw-in terminals are provided for the four control wires and for the +5 volts and ground wires.

A pair of black and red wires are provided to make the connection to the game's power supply. For better optic sensitivity, a black plastic bushing is also provided to replace the existing white one normally found on a WICO joystick.

The price for this hi-tech joystick ranges from $15-$26, depending on volume. I'm hoping that several game manufacturers will take a good look at this unit and consider using it on all their games and kits. For more information, contact Randy Mitchell or Don Swaby of Perfect 360 in Salt Lake City (801) 534-8950.

As always...keep cranking! ☐

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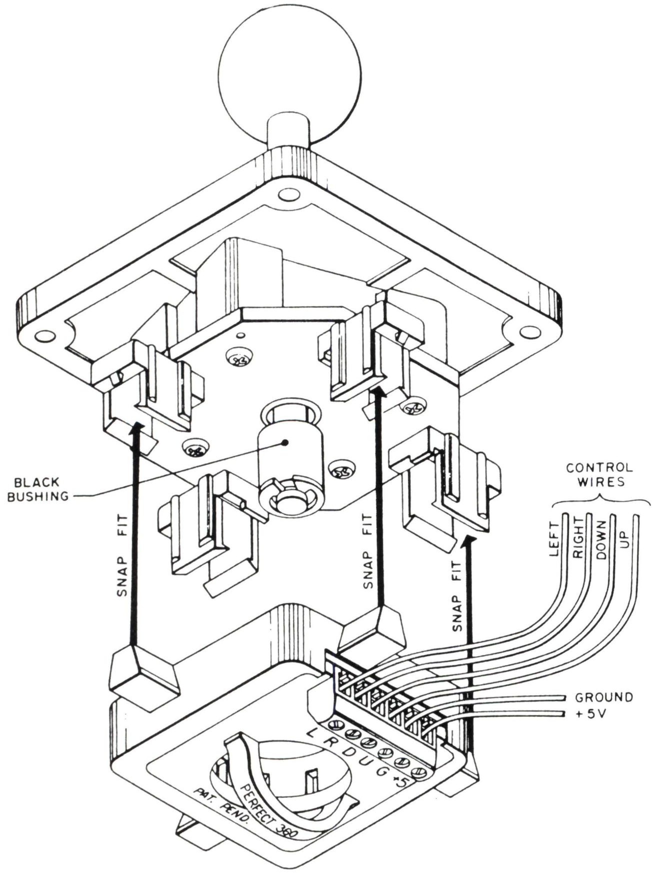


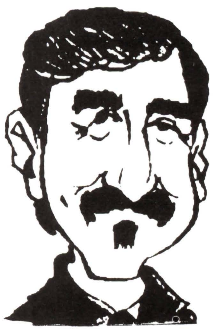
Perfect 360 Joystick Controls

Perfect 360 joystick controls are designed to replace the leaf switches on WICO standard, heavy duty joysticks #15-945201, #15-945301 and #15-945401 (two-way, four-way, and eight-way). Installation time: 10 minutes or less.

Instructions

1. Unplug the video machine.
2. With supplied wire, connect RED to +5 VOLTS and BLACK to GROUND on the power supply.
3. Route the RED and BLACK wires to the joystick, using supplied wire ties.
4. Remove the existing leaf switches and white bushing from the WICO joystick (if retrofitting).
5. Cut the control wires from the leaf switches, noting the color of the wire corresponding to UP, DOWN, RIGHT, and LEFT.
6. Install the provided BLACK BUSHING on the control shaft.
7. Snap the *Perfect 360* control onto the joystick with the connecting block facing the player's **RIGHT.**
8. Strip each control wire 1/8-inch and insert into the proper terminal of the connecting block, securing it with the set screw using the *Perfect 360* screwdriver.
9. Cut the RED (+5) and BLACK (GROUND) to length and strip the ends 1/8-inch. Insert and secure into the connecting block.
10. Plug into video machine and test.

Randy Fromm



Repair log:

Understanding Hantarex power supply circuits

The Hantarex MTC 9000 monitor has some unusual features that set it apart from most other video game monitors. Some of these features—such as a detached adjustment board (for adjusting the vertical hold, horizontal hold, etc.) and a very sharp and colorful display—are easily noticed, while other, more technical features are not.

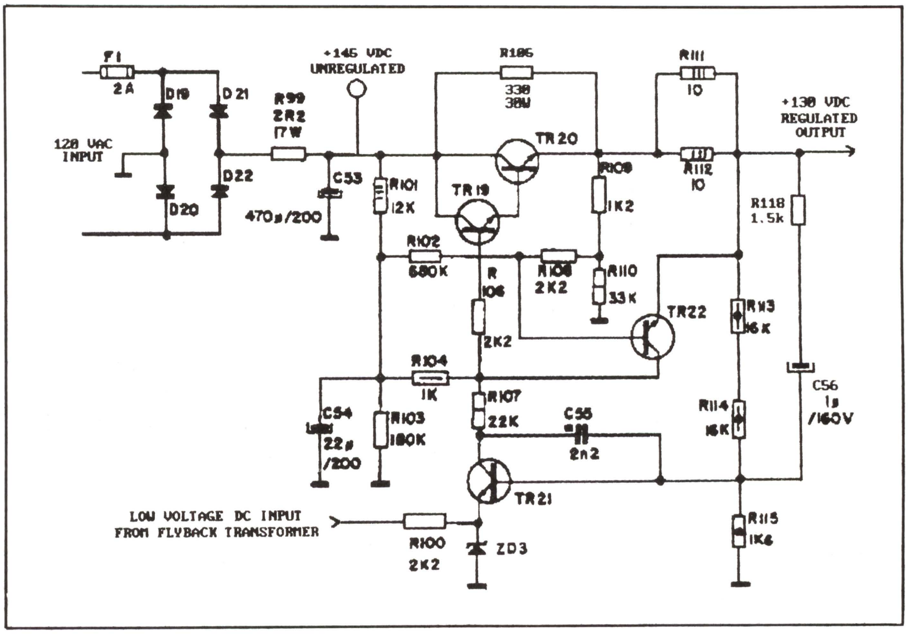
One of these unique technical features is a special circuit in the power supply. It transforms the +130 VDC regulator circuit into an "anti-ripple" circuit in the event the 120 volt AC input drops below the point where the regulator circuit works properly. The circuit is simple and requires the addition of just two components: resistor R118 (1.5K) and capacitor C56 (1 microfarad, 160 VDC).

These components serve to couple any undesirable AC that may appear at the output of the voltage regulator circuit back into the "error amplifier" (transistor TR21 and zener diode ZD3). The error amplifier circuit senses the drop in output voltage caused by the AC ripple and boosts the output voltage of the regulator circuit back up to +130 VDC to compensate for it.

The anti-ripple circuit will also compensate for a defective primary filter capacitor (C53) that may not be functioning at 100 percent efficiency. If a bad filter capacitor allows some ripple into the unregulated power supply, the anti-ripple circuit will clean up the output and prevent the monitor from displaying a picture that looks as if it were doing the hula!

There is another distinctive circuit in the Hantarex power supply; it's called an "over-current protection circuit" (OCP). The OCP uses a transistor (TR22) to detect a short circuit on the +130 VDC supply. When the emitter of TR22 is grounded by a short on the output of the power supply, TR22 is turned on. This in turn removes the base voltage of TR19. (TR19 and TR20 form a darlington circuit that make up the series-pass regulator.) When the base voltage of TR19 is removed, the regulator circuit is effectively shut down. This prevents the regulator from damage due to the short circuit.

Unfortunately, there is a side effect to the operation of the OCP circuit that can be somewhat confusing if you don't know what to look for. One of the most common failures in this monitor is a shorted high-voltage unit and/or horizontal output transistor. In just about every other type of monitor, this failure will blow the fuse. But in the Hantarex MTC 9000, it activates the OCP. The fuse does not blow!


F1
2A
D19
D21
D20
D22
120 VAC INPUT
R99
2R2
17W
+145 VDC UNREGULATED
C53
470µ/200
R101
12K
R105
330
30W
TR20
TR19
R109
1K2
R111
10
R112
10
+130 VDC REGULATED OUTPUT
R118
1.5k
R102
680K
R
106
2K2
R108
2K2
R110
33K
TR22
R113
16K
R104
1K
C54
22µ
/200
R103
180K
R107
22K
C55
2n2
R114
16K
C56
1µ
/160V
TR21
LOW VOLTAGE DC INPUT FROM FLYBACK TRANSFORMER
R100
2K2
ZD3
R115
1K6

Additionally, there is a large, high-wattage resistor (R105 330 ohms, 30 watts) that is connected in parallel with the series-pass regulator transistor. This ''shunt'' resistor is used to carry some of the power supply current so the regulator transistor doesn't have to work so hard. It's kind of a ''helping hand'' resistor. When the OCP shuts down the regulator circuit due to the short, current from the unregulated power supply (at approximately +145 volts DC) passes through R105 to ground. This 30 watt resistor is now dissipating over 60 watts of power! Get out the white bread, mama; you can make toast on this thing!

If you have a Hantarex MTC 9000 with a super-heated R105, chances are overwhelmingly good that you have a bad high-voltage unit (also known as the flyback transformer or E.H.T. transformer). Hantarex does not manufacture its own high-voltage units and, unfortunately, got a bad batch of units from the manufacturer. A bad flyback transformer will often look melted, swollen, or cracked—but not always.

The good news is that you may purchase replacement HV units directly from Hantarex for around $37 (Hantarex part number 28026030). The new units have been working just fine. Be sure to test the horizontal output transistor (TR15) as well because the bad HV unit may have damaged the transistor. The transistor also may be ordered from Hantarex.

Updates from Wells-Gardner

Here are some helpful hints from the service department at Wells-Gardner regarding its popular K7000 series monitor:

Insufficient vertical size on the Model K7918: Add 47 ohm resistor in parallel with R80.

Horizontal bending caused by insufficient sync level: Decrease R43, all the way to short if necessary.

Negative sync pulse doesn't drop to saturation level: Increase R106 (base of Q7) all the way to open if necessary.

Distorted picture: D10 open.

To disable the shutdown circuit, short pin 5,IC2 to ground.

Ghosting or over-driving IC1 with 4V p-p or more: Add 470 ohm resistors in parallel with the emitter resistors in RGB amplifiers (R13, R14, R15).

To obtain more down shift, parallel R83 with a 680 ohm resistor.

To shift up vertically, remove R83 or increase value.

Vertical foldover: D25, C48 (100 microfarad, 35 volt).

Vertical foldover, K7401: Replace R107 with a 1.2K 5 percent.

Vertical foldover when adjusting VR9: Change R107 to 1.2K; short R121 on K7103.

Horizontal frequency off: Change C19 (5600 pf).

To change the width, change the value of C38.

If you have vertical, colored lines, check emitter capacitors on the neck board (red-C201, green-C202, blue-C203). ☐

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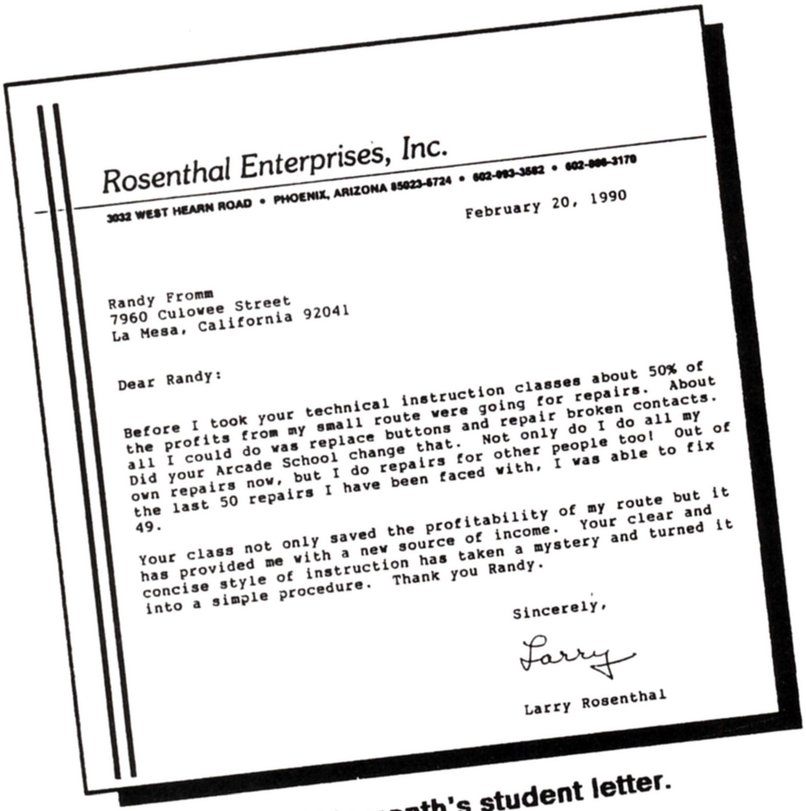

Rosenthal Enterprises, Inc.

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February 20, 1990

Randy Fromm
7960 Culowee Street
La Mesa, California 92041

Dear Randy:

Before I took your technical instruction classes about 50% of the profits from my small route were going for repairs. About all I could do was replace buttons and repair broken contacts. Did your Arcade School change that. Not only do I do all my own repairs now, but I do repairs for other people too! Out of the last 50 repairs I have been faced with, I was able to fix 49.

Your class not only saved the profitability of my route but it has provided me with a new source of income. Your clear and concise style of instruction has taken a mystery and turned it into a simple procedure. Thank you Randy.

Sincerely,

Larry

Larry Rosenthal

This month's student letter.

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Mark Gavett

Some common problems with CD jukeboxes

With all new and innovative ideas come some minor problems. This has been the case for CD jukeboxes. With more and more operators placing these expensive jukeboxes on their routes, problems are starting to show up.

A great number of these problems may be attributed to the manufacturers of the disc itself, the way the disc is handled, or the way the disc is moved around the jukebox mechanism.

While the Sony mechanism is similar to the older 45-style mechanism Seeburg has used for years, it is still prone to problems. Most of the early-production Sony players had problems with a nylon roller—used to open and close the chucking arm—wearing flat on one side. And after about a year the players may be plagued by small particles of dust or dirt building up on the laser carriage slide rails, causing them to stick. This results in a skipping sound and occasionally rejects the CD. Usually these problems are several years apart.

Sony has apparently done its homework. The player's disc-handling technique is not causing many problems with the disc media surface. Even though this unit is a sealed case player in a really dirty or dusty environment, the discs are still showing some cloudy or dirty spots. Routine cleaning of the discs should be performed approximately every six to eight weeks—more if you notice more film or dirt. Every location is different.

Disc cleaning and handling

To clean the discs you could buy a CD cleaner for about $30 to $35. These cleaners rotate the discs and wipe the disc from one edge across the center to the other edge of the disc simultaneously. The manufacturers of the disc cleaners recommend the use of a supplied cleaning fluid in conjunction with their cleaning machines.

These cleaners work well but are a bit time consuming, as each disc has to turn 20-plus times before it is clean. To do it myself, I use a soft cotton cloth and wipe the disc from the center out, turning the disc about 1/8th turn and wiping again until the disc has been cleaned thoroughly. If you notice scratches in the plastic you should try to buff the scratch out. Use a high-grade plastic polish or a glaze compound such as mirror glaze.

Be aware that the protective surface is very thin and you could cause more damage if you are not careful. Approximately 80 percent or more of all scuffs and scratches can be buffed out. The protective surface is a thin plastic coating called Lexan, a polycarbonate plastic similar to plexiglass used on video games. If you have a cleaning technique for plexiglass, try it on a disc.

Rowe has chosen to stay with a scaled-down version of its 45 jukebox mechanism, modifying it to accommodate a laser sled instead of a turntable motor and tone arm assembly. The CD is handled the same way 45s were handled.

This brings up one problem—the magazine centering adjustment. This adjustment is much more critical on the CD jukebox than it was on a 45. The media or reflective side of the disc may be closer to the mechanism, causing more scratches as the disc is inserted and removed from the magazine. These are the small scratches on the outer-most edge of the disc.

Also, when the disc is being transferred back into the magazine and it's not completely full of discs, the magazine may be pulled one way or the other and get out of alignment. A little bit of play in the gripper bow assembly allows the disc to turn slightly and could cause the disc to catch the magazine wire basket instead of going into the open slot.

With the 45-styled mechanism, dust and dirt are a little more likely because of the open vents into the amplifier area. The Rowe mechanism plays the disc in the horizontal position with no more than a magnetic hub for hold-down purposes.

The Phillips-supplied hub does not allow much room for an inaccurate disc-thickness tolerance. You may witness the laser moving violently as it tries to focus and find its starting position. Or you may witness the same thin disc spinning up faster than normal. Then it may appear as if the CD has stopped and reversed direction. Some discs can spin themselves out of the spindle. Even though not all of Rowe's jukeboxes are affected, the company has addressed the problem by introducing a CD turntable hub modification kit, PN #2195510. This kit contains a small rubber ring to attach to the new hold-down hub and a small plastic piece that glues down to the spindle to help centering and gripping of thin CDs.

After installing this kit into a jukebox that was throwing discs, we have not had a single service call. To obtain this modification kit, contact your authorized Rowe distributor.

Exchange program and improvements

If some of your CD jukeboxes are early production models, you may want to go into the bookkeeping and check the version of software that your jukebox is using. The current versions are 2.1 for both the mechanism control board and central computer boards.

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Since 1970 ©Bob's Space Racers, 1990

Rowe is very devoted to service, so their products will be profitable and reliable for many years to come. In its attempt to make the laser jukebox more reliable, Rowe has started a complete laser carriage exchange program. This exchange is being performed due to a transistor that may fail and make the laser assembly unrepairable.

The manufacturer of the CDM-3 feels that this transistor may fail in the future, so they are exchanging laser carriages before they fail. The laser update kit model CDM-3 is also available from your authorized Rowe distributor. Rowe has sent a service bulletin indicating that CD-100 boxes with serial numbers earlier than 8546, along with the HCD-1 serial numbers earlier than 2570, should have the CDM-3 update kit installed before this laser drive transistor fails.

Rowe has also issued a service bulletin regarding the CD decoder board. This bulletin states that transistor number 6314 on the decoder board may open, causing the player to run backwards and move the optical swing arm fully outward. Rowe has a CD decoder -11 volt jumper kit available (part number 26712601) for the CD-100 jukeboxes with serial numbers earlier than 8826, along with HCD-1 units with serial numbers earlier than 2642.

After having an uncontrollable jet-like sound through our sound system, we found cold and broken solder connections on the Rowe CD-100 amplifiers, both on the equalizer board and the two small driver boards. If the solder on the two driver boards cracks loose, you may damage the audio output transistors by subjecting them to severe spikes or transients, causing the transistors to short. If you notice one channel out and have blown one of the fuses on the driver board, check for the pre-driver transistors' solder being cracked. In some cases the pad may even be torn away from the board.

I have talked to Rowe's engineering staff. They are aware of this cracked solder problem and have made several changes. As of early March 1990, the driver boards have been changed to correct for this solder cracking. Rowe's new driver board lays the transistor down against the board and has increased the diameter of the pads on the solder side of the board. If you are working on one of the older-style amplifier boards, be aware that the two transistors with the small heat sinks attached to them are not pick-up points to pull the board out with.

Looking over the entire amplifier for cold solder or cracked solder joints is advised. Otherwise, the deep bass vibration and cracked connections may cost you money and down-time prematurely.

On very early Seeburg amplifiers there were a lot of problems with underrated bridge rectifiers in the power supply. This would cause the bridge to fail under heavy usage, causing a blown fuse in the amplifier. There are two bridge rectifiers on the amplifier module. If you have had a problem it would be a good idea to replace both bridge rectifiers with a larger 35 amp/200 volt bridge rectifier. Be certain the bridge rectifiers you purchase are ones that have a metal case, not plastic. The metal case dissipates heat quicker.

Credits outshine debits

With the upgrade into high-tech CD jukeboxes, you get considerably better sound quality, more powerful amplifiers, better bookkeeping, and adjustable features that help tune the jukebox for the locations' needs for better ROI. The bookkeeping even maintains a log of errors that are encountered, as well as the time and date the errors occur. Bookkeeping also tracks the disc conditions (how many times the disc was rejected) and the most and least popular discs to help suit everyone's taste in music.

With these advantages, it's no wonder all of your locations want CD jukeboxes; wouldn't you? Even with the various problems in the different CD jukeboxes, the CD technology is still relatively new to the coin-op business. Mistakes must be made in order to develop an even better, more reliable musical wonder.

Who knows what the manufacturers are going to try next? Maybe bigger, more powerful amplifiers or even digital delays to accommodate locations with large, open rooms. It's been a successful step so far. With a full-spectrum equalizer on each channel, the sound quality is phenomenal. To all the CD jukebox manufacturers, keep up the good work—along with the excellent service support. ☐

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Bill,

I need to know ...

1. Should I rotate the Double Dragon at Quick Mart?
2. Did you want to put another machine into Zak's Pizza?
3. Should we sell one of our Main Events?
4. Do you want me to pull everything from Video Theatre this week?
5. Does Hilda have my collection reports ready for tomorrow?

Charles

The PROFIT! CONTROL SYSTEM is computer software that takes control of all your amusement or vending equipment. Here is software for your microcomputer that calculates and delivers profits to your bottom line. It is not a general accounting package; its a system for you if you manage revenue-producing equipment (arcade or route). It makes every machine and every location a profit center and focuses on profits, ROI, collection histories, transfer dates, and meter readings.

And getting the answers to your questions is no great effort; our 70+ page instruction manual explains THE PROFIT CONTROL SYSTEM in detail. Installation is quick and using the program is easy. Entering collections is simple; equipment transfers, different token rates, and minimums are no problem. And, you never have to write another collection ticket by hand.

Here are the details. MS/DOS compatible for popular systems like IBM, Compaq, Tandy, etc. based on 8086, 80286, or 80386 microprocessors. Operating System: MS/DOS (or PC/DOS) 2.0 or higher. Language: Compiled QuickBasic by Microsoft. Memory Requirement: Minimum 256k with two disks or harddisk. Printer Requirements: 132 characters per line capacity in standard or compressed print, continuous paper feed recommended. Equipment Capacity: Limited only by disk storage space. Practical limits are 50 to 5000 pieces of equipment. Disk Format: All orders include both 3-1/2" and 5-1/4" disk formats.

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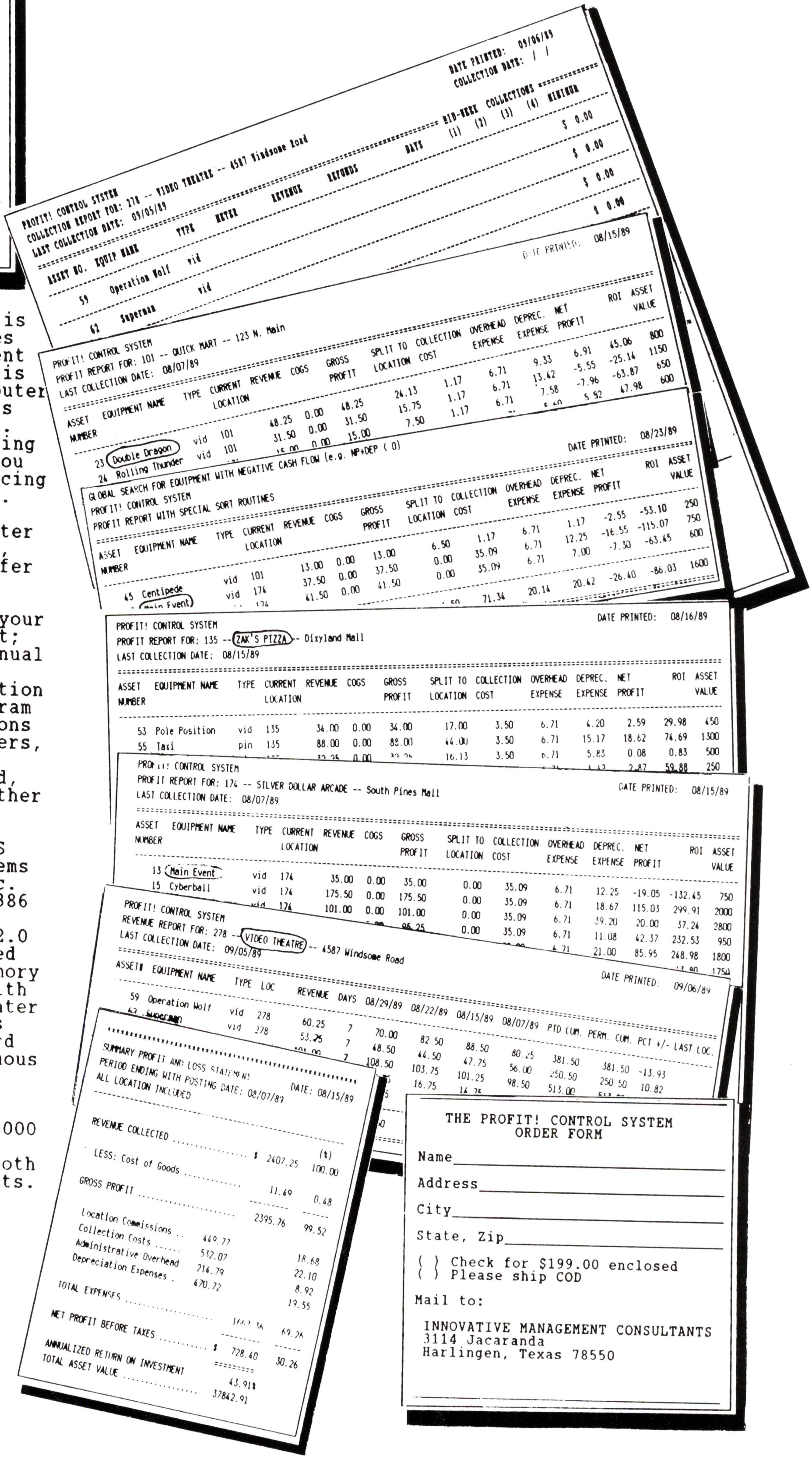
Call (512)425-1918 to place your order. Give your name, address, and telephone number and we'll ship COD, or FAX your order to our FAX number (512)423-6661 and we will ship COD. You may also mail the order form along with your check for $195.00 plus $4.00 postage ($199.00)



```
PROFIT! CONTROL SYSTEM                                                        DATE PRINTED:  09/06/89
COLLECTION REPORT FOR: 278 -- VIDEO THEATRE -- 4587 Windsome Road             COLLECTION DATE:  / /
LAST COLLECTION DATE:  09/05/89
========================================================================= MID-WEEK COLLECTIONS ==========
ASSET NO.  EQUIP NAME        TYPE    METER      REVENUE     REFUNDS     DAYS  (1)  (2)  (3)  (4)  MINIMUM
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
   59      Operation Wolf    vid                                                               $ 0.00
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
   62      Superman          vid                                                               $ 0.00
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
                                                                                               $ 0.00
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
                                                                                               $ 0.00
```

```
                                                                                   DATE PRINTED:  08/15/89
PROFIT! CONTROL SYSTEM
PROFIT REPORT FOR: 101 -- QUICK MART -- 123 N. Main
LAST COLLECTION DATE:  08/07/89
=========================================================================================================
ASSET   EQUIPMENT NAME    TYPE CURRENT  REVENUE  COGS   GROSS   SPLIT TO COLLECTION OVERHEAD DEPREC.  NET     ROI  ASSET
NUMBER                         LOCATION                 PROFIT  LOCATION COST       EXPENSE  EXPENSE  PROFIT       VALUE
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
   23 Double Dragon    vid  101     48.25   0.00   48.25   24.13    1.17     6.71     9.33     6.91   45.06   800
   24 Rolling Thunder  vid  101     31.50   0.00   31.50   15.75    1.17     6.71    13.42    -5.55  -25.14  1150
                                                            7.50    1.17     6.71     7.58    -7.96  -63.87   650
                                                                                               5.52   47.98   600
```

```
                                                                                   DATE PRINTED:  08/23/89
GLOBAL SEARCH FOR EQUIPMENT WITH NEGATIVE CASH FLOW (e.g. NP+DEP ( 0)
PROFIT! CONTROL SYSTEM
PROFIT REPORT WITH SPECIAL SORT ROUTINES
=========================================================================================================
ASSET   EQUIPMENT NAME    TYPE CURRENT  REVENUE  COGS   GROSS   SPLIT TO COLLECTION OVERHEAD DEPREC.  NET     ROI  ASSET
NUMBER                         LOCATION                 PROFIT  LOCATION COST       EXPENSE  EXPENSE  PROFIT       VALUE
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
                                                             6.50    1.17     6.71     1.17    -2.55  -53.10   250
   45 Centipede        vid  101     13.00   0.00   13.00     0.00   35.09     6.71    12.25   -16.55 -115.07   750
      Main Event       vid  174     37.50   0.00   37.50     0.00   35.09     6.71     7.00    -7.30  -63.45   600
                            174     41.50   0.00   41.50            71.34    20.14    20.62   -26.40  -86.03  1600
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PROFIT! CONTROL SYSTEM                                                             DATE PRINTED:  08/16/89
PROFIT REPORT FOR: 135 -- ZAK'S PIZZA -- Dixyland Mall
LAST COLLECTION DATE:  08/15/89
=========================================================================================================
ASSET   EQUIPMENT NAME    TYPE CURRENT  REVENUE  COGS   GROSS   SPLIT TO COLLECTION OVERHEAD DEPREC.  NET     ROI  ASSET
NUMBER                         LOCATION                 PROFIT  LOCATION COST       EXPENSE  EXPENSE  PROFIT       VALUE
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
   53 Pole Position    vid  135     34.00   0.00   34.00   17.00    3.50     6.71     4.20     2.59   29.98   450
   55 Taxi             pin  135     88.00   0.00   88.00   44.00    3.50     6.71    15.17    18.62   74.69  1300
                                                            16.13    3.50     6.71     5.83     0.08    0.83   500
                                                                                               2.87   59.88   250
```

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PROFIT! CONTROL SYSTEM
PROFIT REPORT FOR: 174 -- SILVER DOLLAR ARCADE -- South Pines Mall                DATE PRINTED:  08/15/89
LAST COLLECTION DATE:  08/07/89
=========================================================================================================
ASSET   EQUIPMENT NAME    TYPE CURRENT  REVENUE  COGS   GROSS   SPLIT TO COLLECTION OVERHEAD DEPREC.  NET     ROI  ASSET
NUMBER                         LOCATION                 PROFIT  LOCATION COST       EXPENSE  EXPENSE  PROFIT       VALUE
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
   13 Main Event       vid  174     35.00   0.00   35.00    0.00   35.09     6.71    12.25   -19.05 -132.45   750
   15 Cyberball        vid  174    175.50   0.00  175.50    0.00   35.09     6.71    18.67   115.03  299.91  2000
                            174    101.00   0.00  101.00    0.00   35.09     6.71    39.20    20.00   37.24  2800
                                                            0.00   35.09     6.71    11.08    42.37  232.53   950
                                                                                     21.00    85.95  248.98  1800
                                                                                                          1750
```

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PROFIT! CONTROL SYSTEM
REVENUE REPORT FOR: 278 -- VIDEO THEATRE -- 4587 Windsome Road
LAST COLLECTION DATE:  09/05/89                                                    DATE PRINTED:  09/06/89
=========================================================================================================
ASSET# EQUIPMENT NAME    TYPE  LOC   REVENUE DAYS 08/29/89 08/22/89 08/15/89 08/07/89 PTD CUM. PERM. CUM. PCT +/- LAST LOC.
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
   59  Operation Wolf    vid   278    60.25   7    70.00    82.50    88.50    80.25    381.50   381.50   -13.93
   62  Superman          vid   278    53.75   7    48.50    44.50    47.75    56.00    250.50   250.50    10.82
                                              7   108.50   103.75   101.25    98.50    513.00
                                                            16.75
```

```
*****************************************************************************
SUMMARY PROFIT AND LOSS STATEMENT
PERIOD ENDING WITH POSTING DATE: 08/07/89                 DATE: 08/15/89
ALL LOCATION INCLUDED
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------

REVENUE COLLECTED ....................... $ 2407.25      (%)
                                                       100.00
  LESS: Cost of Goods ...............         11.49
                                                          0.48
GROSS PROFIT .......................          -------   ------
                                             2395.76     99.52
  Location Commissions ..      449.77
  Collection Costs ......      532.07                    18.68
  Administrative Overhead      216.79                    22.10
  Depreciation Expenses .      470.72                     8.92
                                                         19.55
TOTAL EXPENSES .....................         1667.36
                                                         69.26
NET PROFIT BEFORE TAXES ........             -------    ------
                                         $    728.40     30.26
ANNUALIZED RETURN ON INVESTMENT              ========
TOTAL ASSET VALUE ...............              43.91%
                                             37842.91
```

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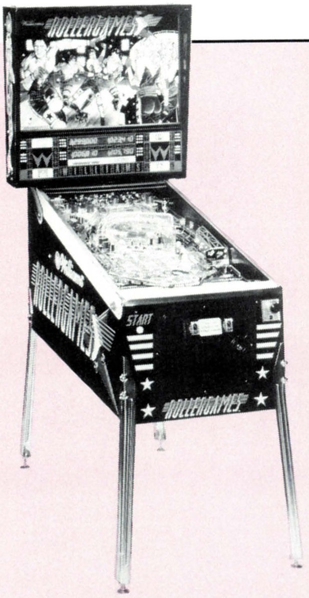


Rollergames

Williams introduces *Rollergames*, a new pinball with a special feature called Deep Freeze Magna-Flip.

Combining speech prompts, visual displays, and the flashing magnet light on the playfield, Deep Freeze holds the ball in place at the top flipper for a guaranteed Power Play shot up The Wall ramp for possible three-ball Multi-Ball, Jackpot, or millions of points.

In *Rollergames*, every player in every game can experience the thrill of a random timed feature. The Wall ramp scores one million points and six consecutive ramp shots reward an incredible eight million points.

There's also Rollermotion, a high-scoring exclusive where players can collect one of 10 different values, including everything from instant Multi-Ball locks to extra balls and specials. In addition, a left bank of S-K-A-T-E targets lights WILLIAMS letters on the backglass. Spelling out W-I-L-L-I-A-M-S starts a special scoring cycle that can earn the player up to four million points.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Williams Electronics Games, 3401 N. California Ave., Chicago, IL 60618; (312) 267-2240; FAX (312) 267-8435.

Series E, Series T Pool Tables

UBI adds two new models to its line of pool tables with the introduction of the *Series E* electronic rack/time play table and *Series T* electronic coin totalizer rack play pool tables.

The features of the *Series E* are set with dip switches and front panel buttons. All settings are shown on the alphanumeric LCD display and include automatic rack/time play and price adjustments, different time and rack modes, a ''deli'' mode to indicate the next player, adjustable low battery warning, a comprehensive bookkeeping reading, and more.

The *Series T* is a more simple version of the *Series E* with rack play only. The list of features includes dual coin mechanism, adjustable pricing (from 25 cents to $2), mechanical coin counting meter only, and side drawer access to the electronics.

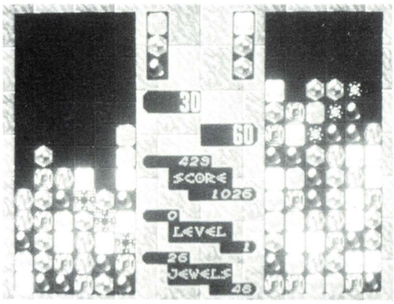
An optional $1-$5 bill acceptor with stacker is available as an option on both models. For more information, or distributor referral, write UBI Inc., 51 Progress St., Union, NJ 07083; (800) 826-0080; FAX (201) 686-1518.

Columns

Sega debuts *Columns*, a two-player kit that invites players to manipulate multi-colored jewels to form a sequence of three or more jewels of the same color either horizontally, vertically, or diagonally.

Players can ''rack-up'' points in one of three levels: easy, medium, or hard. Scoring is based on the number of jewels that disappear in the sequence, the current level of difficulty, and the speed at which the player drops the jewels into place.

When a sequence of three or more of the same colored jewels is formed, the jewels in that sequence are magically removed, and all jewels located above those removed drop to occupy the vacated squares on the screen. If the new arrangement of jewels (after collapse) forms more sequences, they are also removed and points are scored.



Controls include one joystick and one button per player. There are six differently colored jewels used in the game. The kit is suitable for installation in both upright and cocktail cabinets.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Sega Enterprises Inc. USA, 2140 Paragon Drive, San Jose, CA 95161; (408) 435-0201; FAX (408) 435-0294.

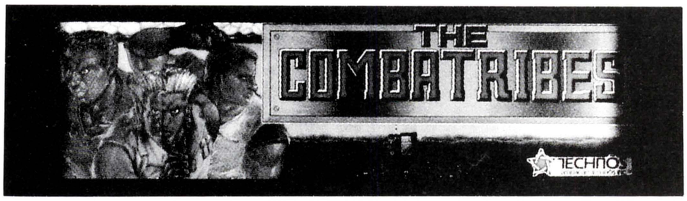
Combatribes

American Technos has developed a two- or three-player horizontal conversion kit in *Combatribes*.

The horizontal conversion kit features new fighting strategies never seen before in a street fighting game. Unusual moves include The Feet Swing, The Backbreaker, and The Double Elbow Bash. An interactive game, it also offers game continuation and power-ups that appeal to players.

Members of the Combatribes are: Beserker, Bullova, and Blitz. This trio uses special techniques and moves to face their ultimate challengers, such as Fats and The Nuclear Warheads, Salamander and The Demon Clown, and Martha's Splatterhead Twins, a notorious group.

For more information, or distributor referral, write American Technos Inc., 4805 S.W. Griffith Drive, Beaverton, OR 97005; (503) 643-9768; FAX (503) 644-1482.



Match Maker, Blimpo Junior

Mr. Vend adds two new items to its product line with the impulse machine, deluxe talking *Match Maker*, and the talking vendor, *Blimpo Junior*.

Flashing lights draw player interest to *Match Maker*, which features a human voice produced by a microchip. There are no moving parts to break or wear out. The machine's cabinet is colorfully decorated with humorous graphics and a rating chart.

Blimpo Junior, a talking vendor that also utilizes a human voice, is available with or without a stand. The unit is appropriate as an add-on to existing standard bulk vending stands, or can be used as a single. *Blimpo Junior* holds toys, candy, and gum.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Mr. Vend, 9588 Topanga Canyon Blvd., Chatsworth, CA 91311; (818) 718-6061 FAX (818) 718-0712.

MATCH MAKER
BLIMPO

World Soccer Finals
World Soccer Finals

World Soccer

The challenging world of international soccer competition greets players in The Leland Corp.'s new dedicated video, *World Soccer Finals*.

Up to four players can participate and make team plays with power headers, bicycle kicks, and strong scoring drives. Defensive plays include stealing the ball or taking down opposing players. Guarding the goal with the computer-assisted goalie is a player's favorite.

Players start by inputting their initials and birth date to allow the game to keep a running register of personal statistics and salary based on play (this screen may be bypassed). Players choose from 16 different flags, pick uniform colors in the locker room, and decide on a field strategy to best optimize a team's abilities. The game posts personal statistics and ranking on the international ladder.

There are two full periods of nonstop action in the form of passing, chipping, booting, and dribbling. An international crowd cheers from the sidelines.

For more information, or distributor referral, write The Leland Corp., 1841 Friendship Drive, El Cajon, CA 92020; (619) 562-7000; FAX (619) 562-9468.

Perfect 360 Joystick

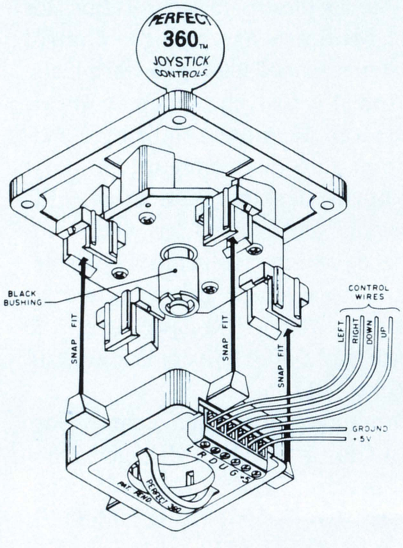
Perfect 360 Joystick Controls introduces a self-contained joystick that is a result of four years of research and development.

The *Perfect 360* joystick has virtually no moving parts to wear, oxidize, misalign, or break. This solid-state control uses optics to determine the relative position of a joystick using frequency matched photoelectric emitter/detector pairs. The result is a simulated opening and closing of electromechanical switches *without* physical contact to the joystick shaft.

Instead of using light reflection (which demands ultra-clean surfaces), the *Perfect 360's* design uses a bushing to selectively block the light path. The assembled printed circuit board is mounted in a rugged/compact plastic housing and can quickly and easily retrofit to standard WICO H/D joysticks without any hardware or software modifications.

Components used in the control have a life expectancy of 10 years. The *Perfect 360* is designed for the life of the game.

For more information, or distributor referral, write Perfect 360 Joystick Controls, 3840 Hillside Lane, Salt Lake City, UT 84109; (801) 534-8950; FAX (801) 487-7784.



Super Pool III

I-VICS debuts an excellent adult street piece in *Super Pool III*, a one- or two-player video offered in three formats: a kit for horizontal monitors, a 13-inch countertop, and a 19-inch dedicated unit.

The name of the game denotes three alternate racks of 6-Ball, 8-Ball, or 9-Ball. Each player station has one joystick and two buttons.

The game allows the players to set the direction of the cue ball with an extended dotted line. Players can utilize both bank shots and direct shots. Players can also set the cue ball with a variety of degrees of draw, follow, right and left English, and masse. *Super Pool III* gives accurate response to every shot.

Several bonus opportunities are available. For example, if a player puts a ball in the flashing pocket (which comes up at random), he can regain a missed shot. Bonus points are awarded for balls put in rotation.

For more information, or distributor referral, write I-VICS Inc., 1900 Wyatt Drive, Suite 3, Santa Clara, CA 95054; (408) 492-1296; FAX (408) 492-1299.

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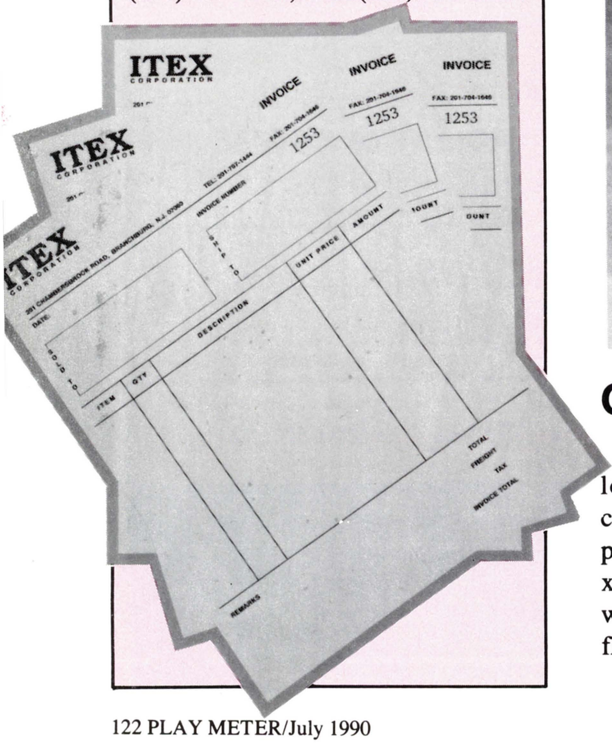
Updated software

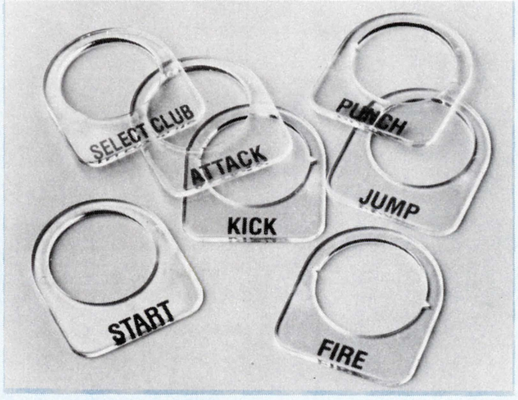
Itex Corporation has released revised software, updating the inkless printing system to include sequential numbering. The "Page II System" will now allow automatic sequential numbering that may begin and/or finish with any number you choose.

This new ticket feature opens numerous new markets to the user. Examples include invoices, tickets, labels, inventory tags, invitations, membership cards, award certificates, etc. Itex has a continued software update policy. Unlike others, it is free. In addition to sequential numbering, free formatting is now offered. This allows the user to configure odd sizes and custom-design his own formats.

This compact, fully-computerized laser foil printing system occupies only 20 square feet of floor space. Preprogrammed, it incorporates various standard formats for printing business cards, letterheads, fliers, memo and note pads, announcements, and more. There are no inks or chemicals involved.

For more information, contact Mr. Marazzi, Itex Corp., 201 Chambers Brook Road, Branchburg, NJ 08876; (201) 707-1444; FAX (201) 704-1646.





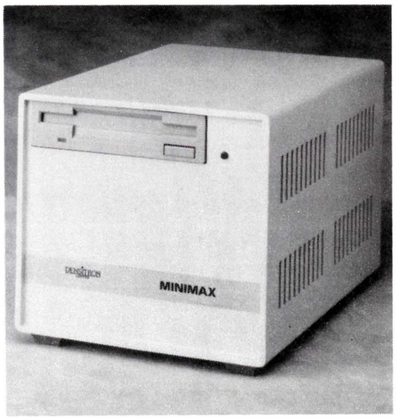
ID tags

Happ Controls Inc. has expanded the company's line of identification tags. These colorful, quality tags are designed for utilization with control panels and are especially popular in video arcade games and similar applications.

Manufactured of Lexan, these tags are printed on the back side with lettering or illustrations as desired. While custom lettering and artwork are available, standard artwork and copy include the following: 1 player, 2 players, kick, jump, fire, missile, start, select club, shoot, attack, 1, 2, punch, shoot/kick, 1 player vs. computer, and grenade. Some art figures are also standard.

Standard colors include red, white blue, green yellow, and amber. Standard shapes include small round, small square, rectangle, medium round, large round, and large square.

For unique and specific ID tag requirements, or more information, contact Happ Controls Inc., 106 Garlisch, Elk Grove, IL 60007; (708) 593-6130; FAX (708) 593-6137.



OEM computer

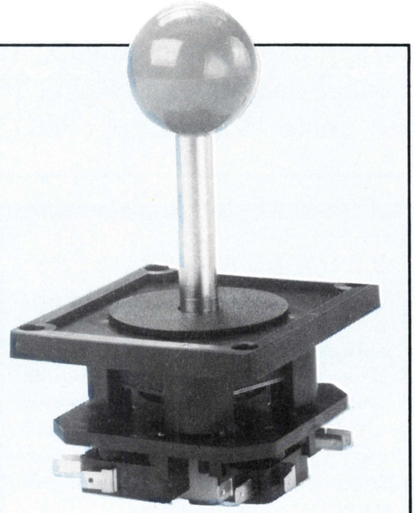
Densitron Corporation now offers a low power Minimax IBM XT-compatible OEM/VAR computer. It is packaged in a compact size of 208 x 144 x 130 (mm) and includes a video output which operates a variety of Densitron flat panel displays.

The unit supports CGA, MDA, or HGA software and is ideal for any OEM application which requires a dedicated PC-based system controller. It offers a powerful system for data communication and PC networking applications.

Among the possible applications for the Minimax are process control systems; small intelligent terminals; automatic test equipment control; OEM applications requiring a PC-compatible environment; minimal footprint desktop PCs; mobile PC systems; and applications where proprietary end-user software is available, but where space and/or power is limited. At the 100-piece level, the price is $2,550. Delivery is four to six weeks ARO.

For more information, contact Gordon Gibson, Product Manager, Densitron Corp., 2540 W. 237th St., Torrance, CA 90505; (213) 530-3530; FAX (213) 534-8419.

Adjustable joystick



WICO Distributing Corp. has rolled out a new eight-way, adjustable shaft joystick with microswitches. It features two shaft lengths in one.

Users have the advantage of using either a long five-and-a-half-inch or a short five-inch length by simply removing the sleeve and placing the "E" clip in the desired position. It features a short throw design for faster action and can be used on metal or wood panels. The WICO stock number is 15-4167-00.

For more information, contact Wico Distribution Corp., 6400 W. Gross Point Road, Niles, IL 60648-4567; (708) 647-7500, (800) 323-0765 or (800) 426-WICO in Illinois.

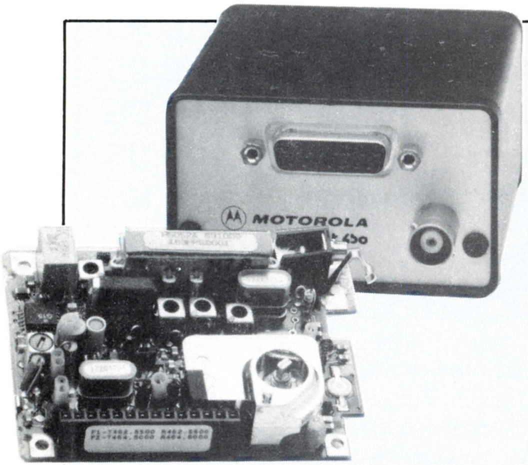
Epoxy adhesive

Master Bond Inc. has unveiled a high temperature, curing epoxy adhesive. This two-component system, labeled EP21HT, has a non-critical one-to-one mix ratio, weight, or volume. It has a service operating temperature range of -100 degrees to +400 degrees Fahrenheit.

This product produces durable, tough bonds to both similar and dissimilar substrates. Adhesion to metals, glass, ceramics, wood, vulcanized rubber, and many plastics is excellent. Bonds are also resistant to thermal cycling and many chemicals, including water, oil, fuels, and most organic solvents—even upon prolonged exposure at elevated temperatures.

EP21HT is available in pint, quart, gallon, five-gallon, and 55-gallon kits.

For more information, contact James Brenner, Marketing Manager, Master Bond Inc., 154 Hobart St., Hackensack, NJ 07601; (201) 343-8983; FAX (201) 343-2132.



Telemetry radios

The Radius Division of Motorola Inc. introduces the RNet 150 and 450 Series of telemetry radios, operational on the UHF and VHF frequency bands (403-430 MHz, 450-470 MHz, and 136-174 MHz).

These models are available on two-channel operation and measure 3.3 inches long x 1.52 inches wide x 2.70 inches high. They weigh a mere 10.2 ounces. Other key features include low current drain, voice and data transmission capability, and variable power levels. The telemetry radios are available with a three-year parts and labor warranty.

For more information, contact Motorola Inc., Communications Sector, Public Relations Dept., 1301 E. Algonquin Road, Schaumburg, IL 60196; (800) 624-8999, ext. 5992. ☐

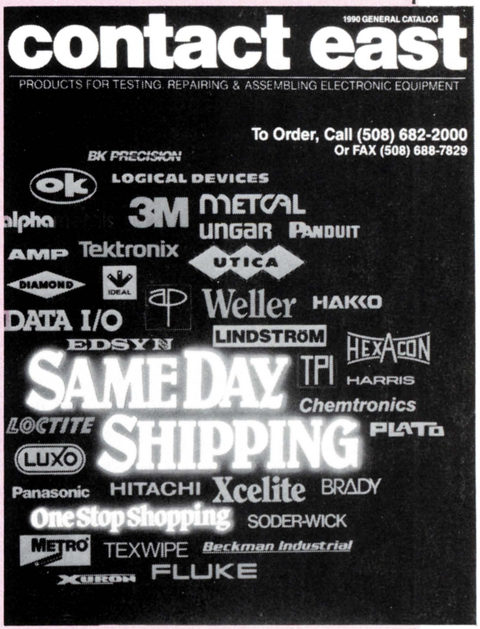
Tool catalog

Contact East has released a new 1990 general catalog, a complete source book of products for testing, repairing, and assembling electronic equipment. The free 148-page catalog contains products for service engineers, managers, and technicians.

Introduced in this latest edition are many new products in the following areas: oscilloscopes, voice/data communication test instruments, component testers, two-way radios, static protection products, soldering supplies and stations, test equipment, power supplies, precision hand tools, and Contact East's exclusive line of tool kits.

All products are described in detail with specifications, full-color photos, and the prices. Contact East's "same-day shipment" policy assures fast delivery; orders received by 4 p.m. are shipped by 5 p.m.

To receive a free copy and one year of technical supplements, write Contact East, 335 Willow St., No. Andover, MA 01845.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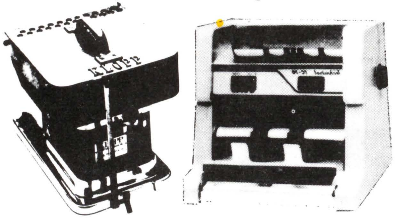

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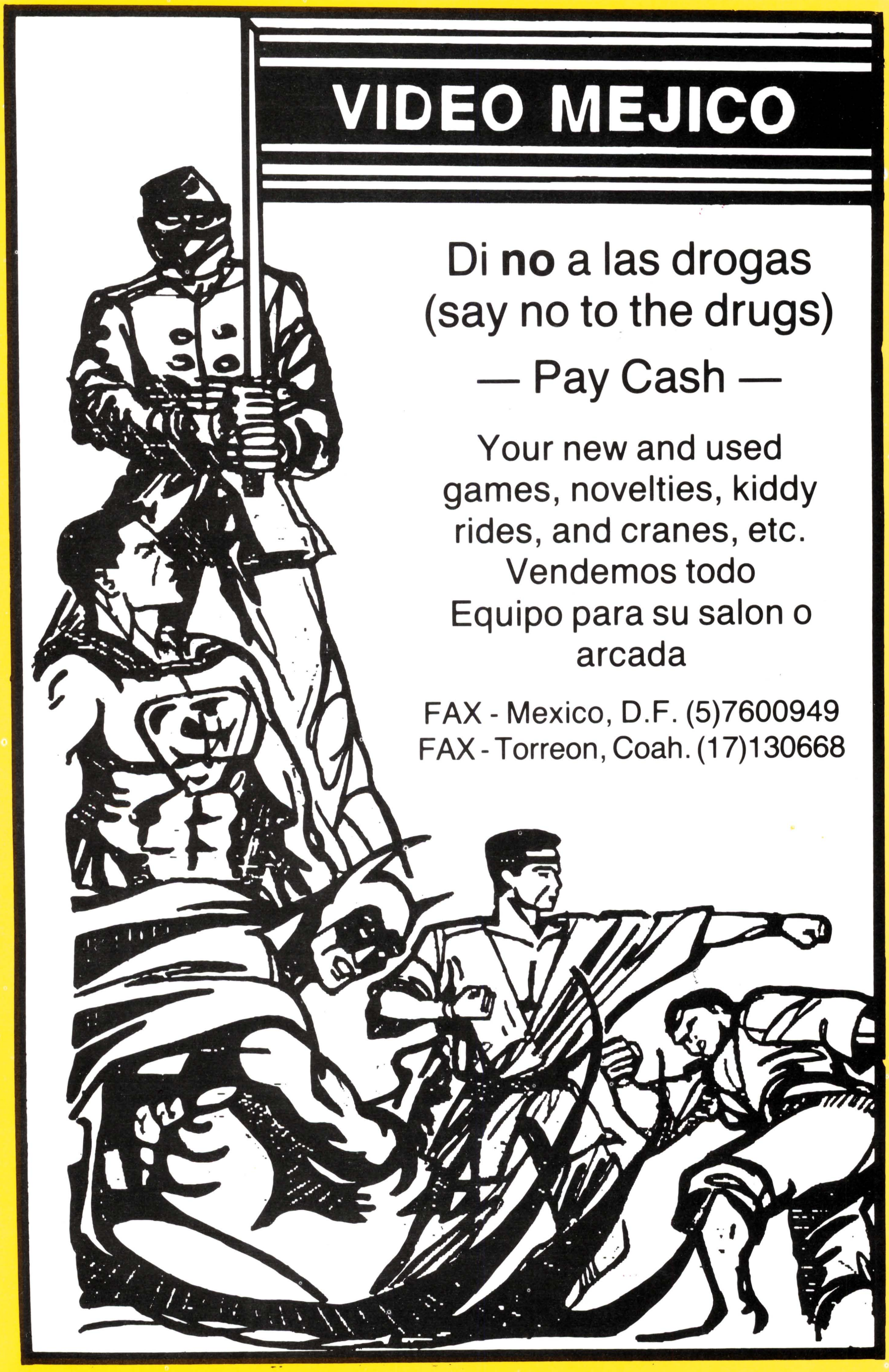

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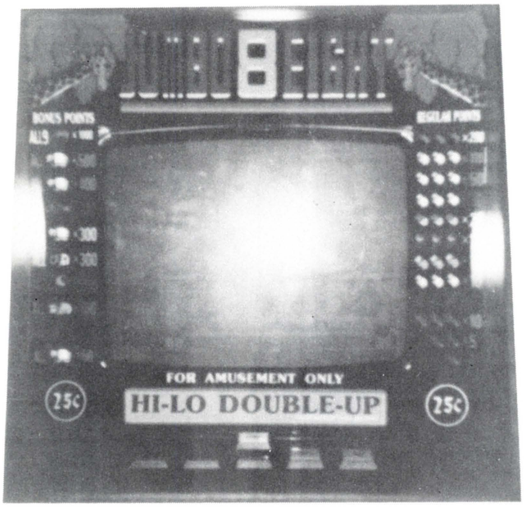

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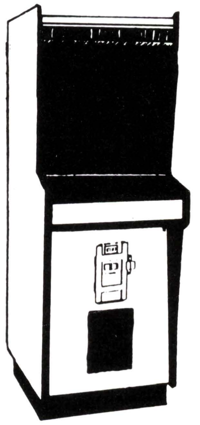

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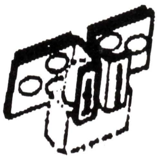

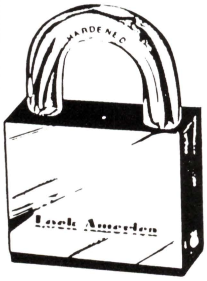

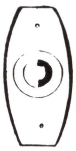

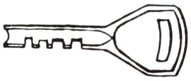

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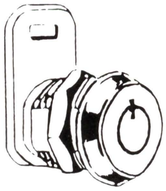

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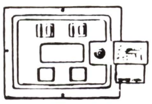

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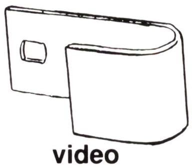

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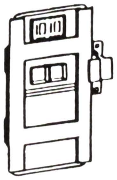

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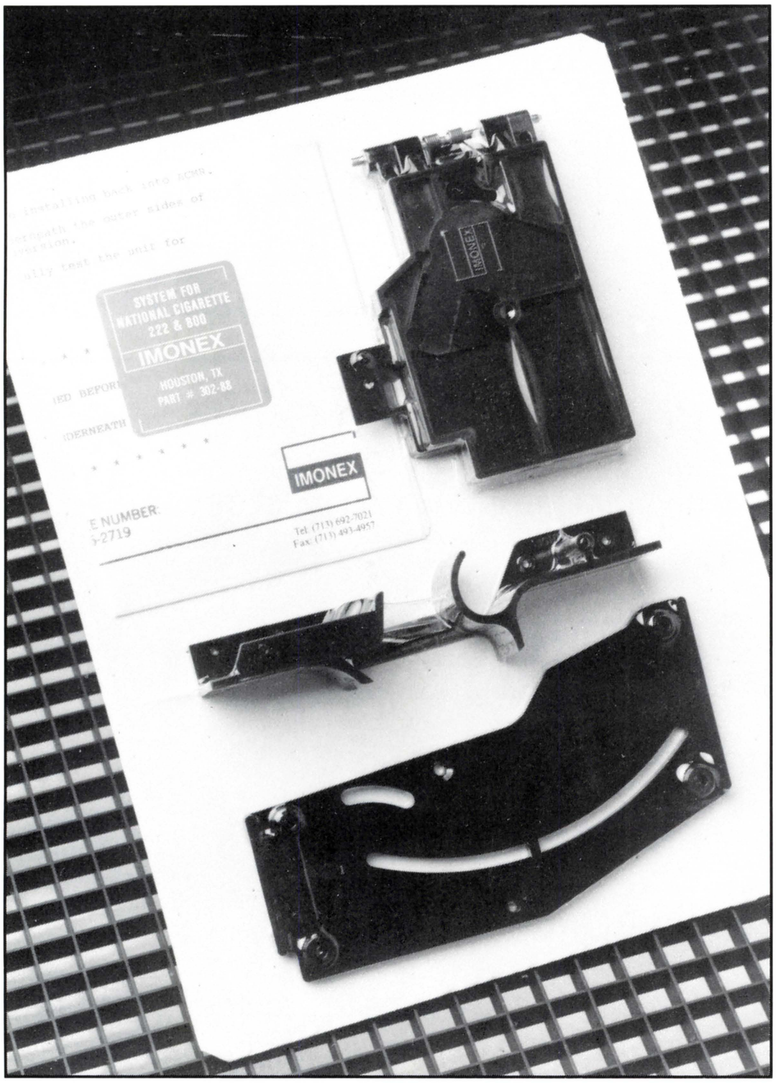
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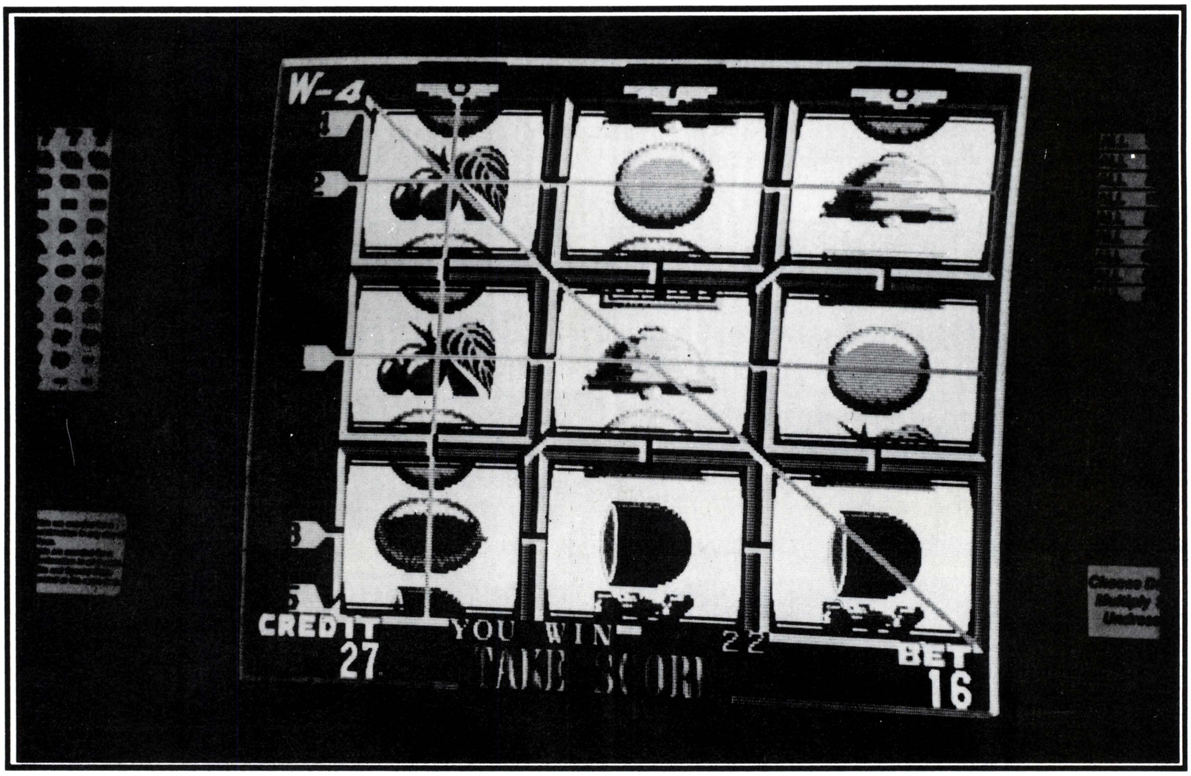
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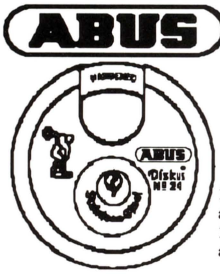

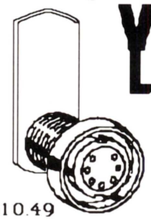

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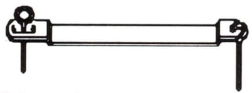

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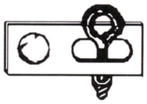

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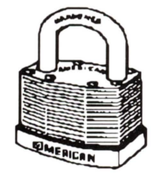

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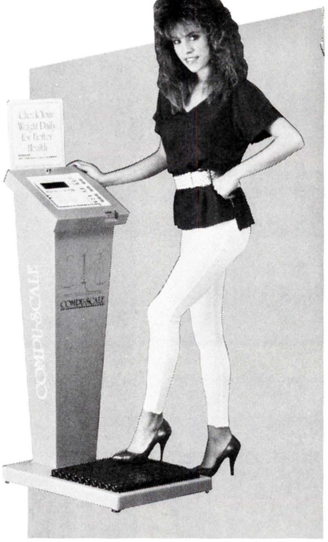

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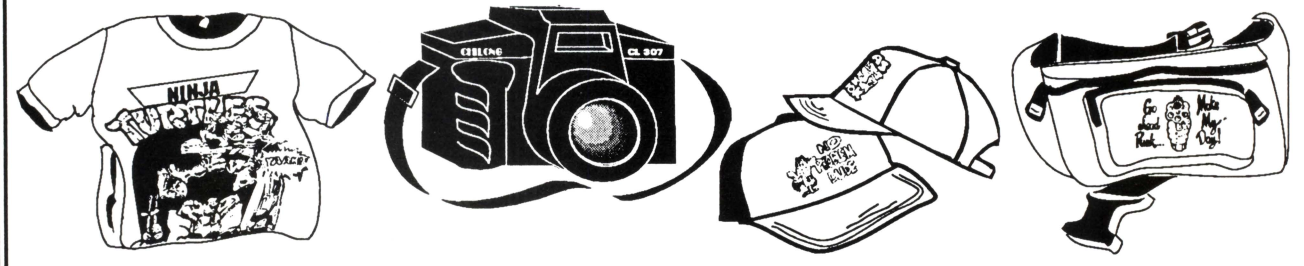

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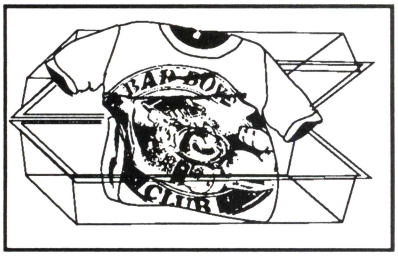

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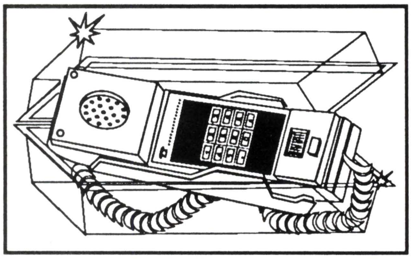

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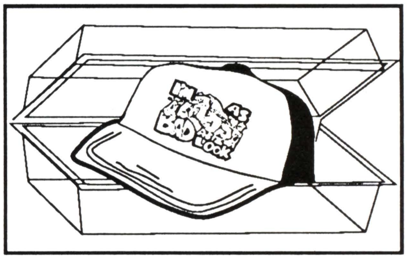

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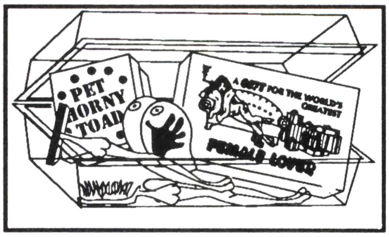

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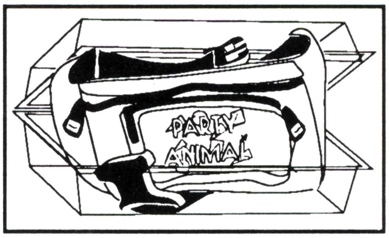

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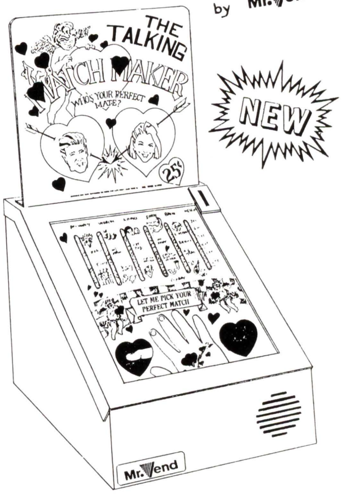

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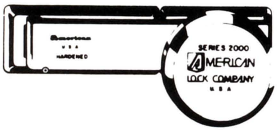

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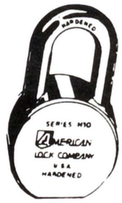

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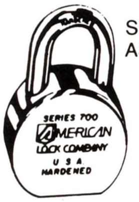

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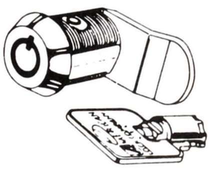

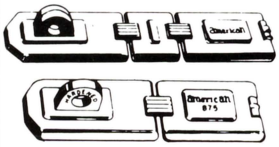

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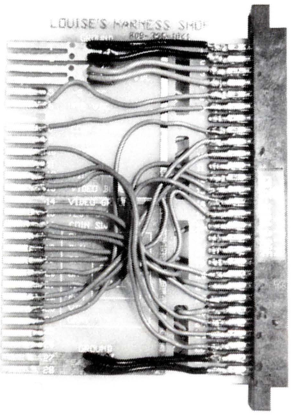

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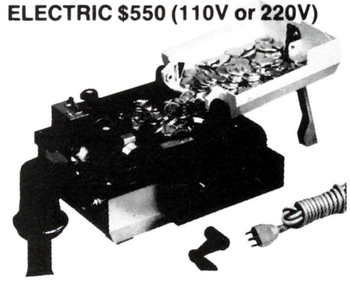

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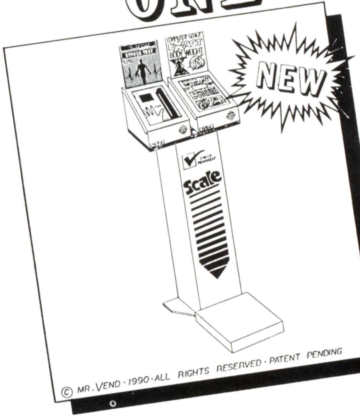

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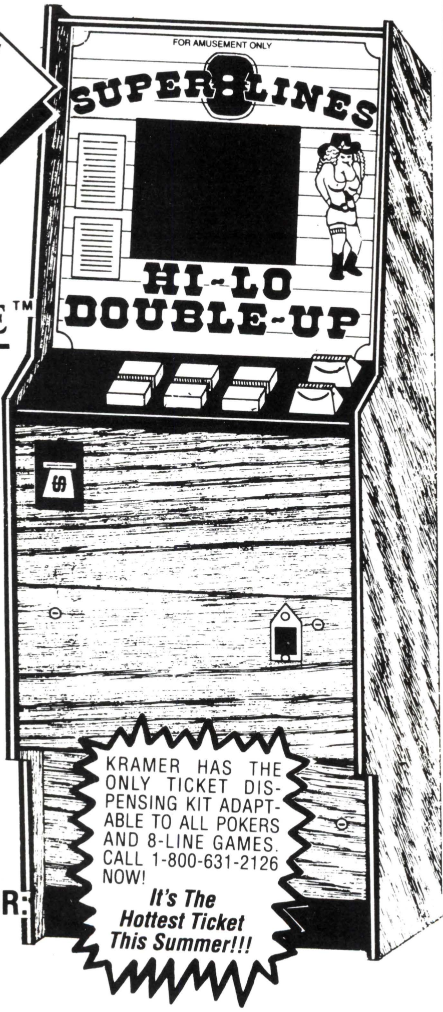

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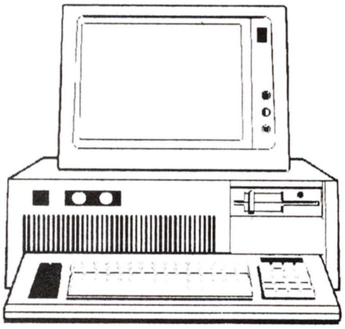

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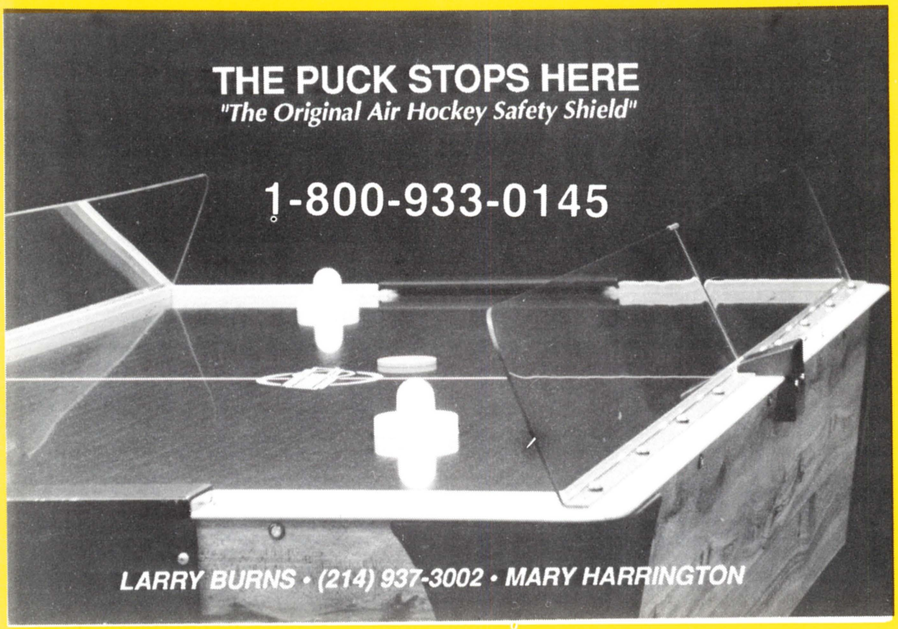

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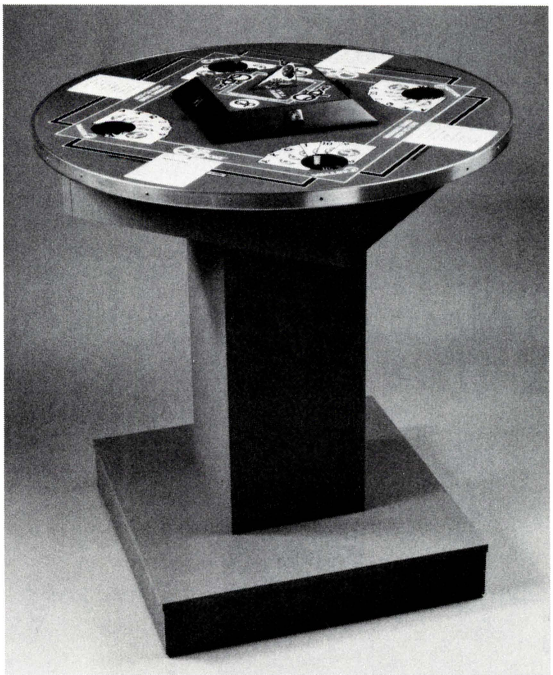

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AMOA

Amusement & Music Operators Association

THE CALENDAR

July 10-11
Latin American Amusement, Music, and Games Exposition, U.S. Trade Center, Mexico City, The Sheraton Maria Isabella Hotel. Contact William T. Glasgow Inc. (708) 333-9292; FAX (708) 333-4086.

July 13-15
Montana Coin Machine Operators Association (MCMOA) Summer Meeting, Chico Hot Springs Resort. Contact Chris Warren (406) 442-7088 or Phil Benson (406) 543-5119.

July 14-15
Star Tech Journal Seminar for Advancing Technicians, Central Distributing, Omaha, Neb. Contact Neil or Jim Calore (609) 662-1080; FAX (609) 662-0537.

July 19-20
Pennsylvania Amusement and Music Machine Association (PAMMA) Annual Trade Show, Sheraton-Lancaster Resort. Contact PAMMA (800) 521-7778 (in Pa.) or (717) 232-5322 (outside Pa).

July 19-21
Billiard Congress of America 7th Annual International Trade Expo, Commonwealth Convention Center, Louisville, Ky. Contact Frank Zdy (619) 278-3877; FAX 619-268-9372.

July 21-22
Star Tech Journal Seminar for Advancing Technicians, Hanson Distributing, Bloomington, Minn. Contact Neil or Jim Calore, (609) 662-1080; FAX (609) 662-0537.

July 28-29
Star Tech Journal Seminar for Advancing Technicians, Mountain Coin Machine Distributors, Phoenix, Ariz., Contact Neil or Jim Calore, (609) 62-1080; FAX (609) 662-0537.

August 10-12
North Dakota Coin Machine Operators Association (NDCMOA) Annual Meeting and Show, Radisson Hotel, Fargo, N.D. Contact S.K. Paulus (701) 223-7588.

August 15-18
National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA) National Education Conference, Ambassador West Hotel, Chicago. Contact Richard Geerdes (312) 346-0370.

August 17-18
The 32nd Annual Convention and Trade Show of the Amusement and Music Operators of Virginia (AMOV), Cavalier Hotel, Virginia Beach, Va. Contact Charles Rowland (804) 262-9283.

August 17-19
Amusement Music Operators of Tennessee (AMOT) General Membership Meeting and Trade Show, Stouffer Nashville Hotel, Nashville, Tenn. Contact Jan Green (901) 521-1234 or (601) 371-1000.

August 25-27
Star Tech Journal Seminars for Advancing Technicians, Commercial Music Co., Dallas. Contact Neil or Jim Calore, (609) 662-1080; FAX (609) 662-0537.

September 13-16
North Carolina Coin Operators Association (NCCOA) Annual Convention and Trade Show, Charlotte Marriott Executive Park, Charlotte, N.C. Contact Bobby or Cindy Earp (919) 584-4833.

September 17-22
Randy Fromm's Arcade School, Chicago. Contact Randy Fromm (619) 697-4035.

September 22-23
Star Tech Journal Seminars for Advancing Technicians, Cleveland Coin Machine Exchange, Livonia, Mich. Contact Neil or Jim Calore (609) 662-1080; FAX (609) 662-0587.

October 11-14
National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA) National Convention and Exhibit of Vending and Foodservice Management, Orange County Convention/Civic Center, Orlando, Fla. Contact NAMA (312) 346-0370.

October 25-27
Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) Expo '90, New Orleans Convention Center, New Orleans. Contact AMOA (312) 644-6610.

October 25—Nov. 3
Randy Fromm's Arcade School, New Orleans. Contact Randy Fromm (619) 697-4035.

International

October 3-5
Spanish Amusement Trade Show, Fer '90 International, Palace of Victoria Eugenia, Barcelona, Spain. Contact Fer '90 International, Secretaria General, Avda Diagonal, 474-08006 Barcelona. Telex 50227 NRTL, FAX (93) 415-00-95, Tel. (93) 218-58-50.

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Where'd you buy those?

There are many issues on which I straddle the fence, unsure of my position. Some are of great societal magnitude, like abortion and the death penalty. Others are trivial—the merits of thick vs. thin pizza crust, should relief pitchers be eligible for the Cy Young Award, that sort of thing.

I do not, however, waffle on the subject of cigarettes. They are, in a word, nasty. Aside from the foul smell and irritating smoke, cigarettes are extremely unhealthy. I shake my head in amazement when I see someone light up one cancer stick after another, oblivious to the hazards.

Sure, sure, I know all the lines. "I've tried, but I just can't quit." "I've gotta die of something." "You're some do-gooder telling me how to lead my life. Go find another crusade." (Our art director, Jane Nisbet, has all kinds of excuses for smoking. Smokers on the defensive should call her for a few creative ones.)

Yet despite these feelings, I find myself in the odd position of opposing those who would ban or severely curtail access to cigarette vending machines. It isn't because I write for a coin-op trade magazine that includes cigarette vending under its umbrella. If the industry came out in support of wife-beating, I wouldn't suddenly go on a pummelling spree.

Rather, I support cigarette vendors because they are being unfairly targeted. If Health Secretary Louis Sullivan held a press conference to announce that, in his opinion, *all cigarettes* should be banned from the market, I'd applaud him. But he hasn't done that. He and other politicians come out with tough rhetoric on the damaging link between cigarette machines and America's youth. When have you heard them focus their energies on stores that sell cigarettes to minors over the counter? About as often as they keep their campaign promises, I'd say.

Ban proponents conveniently overlook the fact that only a small percentage of teenagers buy their smokes from vending machines. In fact, a host of studies indicates that keeping kids away from their friends and parents would dry-up the source. "Sorry, Frankie, but we're shipping you off to solitary confinement. I know you'll miss us, but we're doing it for your own good! Can't get no cigarettes where you're going, son!"

Seriously, there is data which would support the claims of cigarette vendors. Richard Funk, chief counsel of the National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA), cited the following statistics at a recent meeting of the Interagency Committee on Smoking and Health.

- The sale of cigarettes through vending machines represents three-and-a-half percent of the total tobacco market.
- There are about 375,000 cigarette vending machines on location throughout the country. Eighty percent are located where persons under 18 years old aren't allowed access, or rarely frequent.
- Twenty-eight percent of smokers under 18 do not buy cigarettes. They get them from friends and family.
- Almost half (45 percent) of teenage smokers are permitted to purchase cigarettes by their parents.
- Almost two-thirds of the frequent purchasers between 13 and 17 years old buy their cigarettes over-the-counter; only one in 11 buys often from vending machines.
- Those who buy over-the-counter do so from these four primary locations: convenience stores (43 percent), gas stations (29 percent), grocery stores (11 percent), and drug stores (six percent).

So, as we can see, prohibiting vending machine sales would not deter teens from buying cigarettes. Vending is already the least common avenue for them.

The AMOA has long taken a stand against unfair legislation on a national level, pointing out these and other inconsistencies. But the banning offensive is gaining momentum on state and local levels. Cigarette vending operators must band together to fend off the ever-mounting attack waves. Complacency today could lead to a lost source of revenue tomorrow. ☐

Christopher Caire

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News Editor

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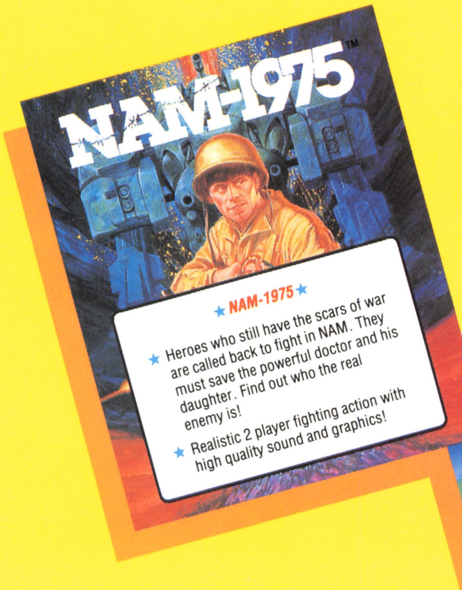

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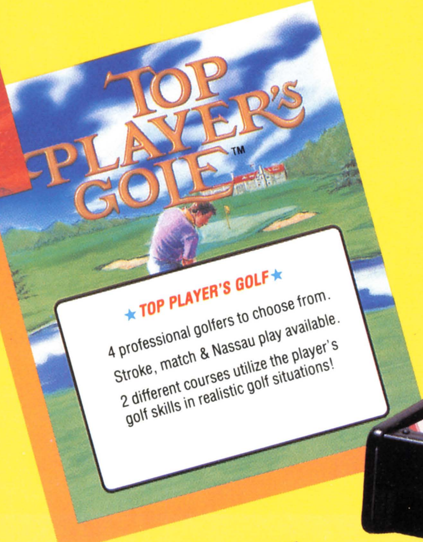
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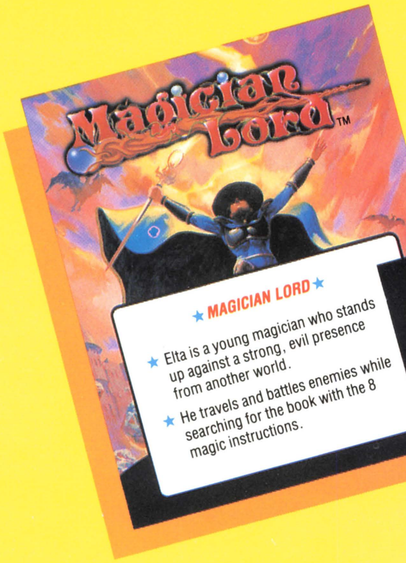
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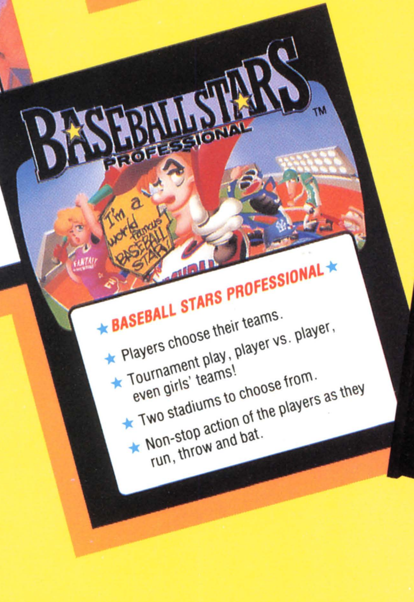
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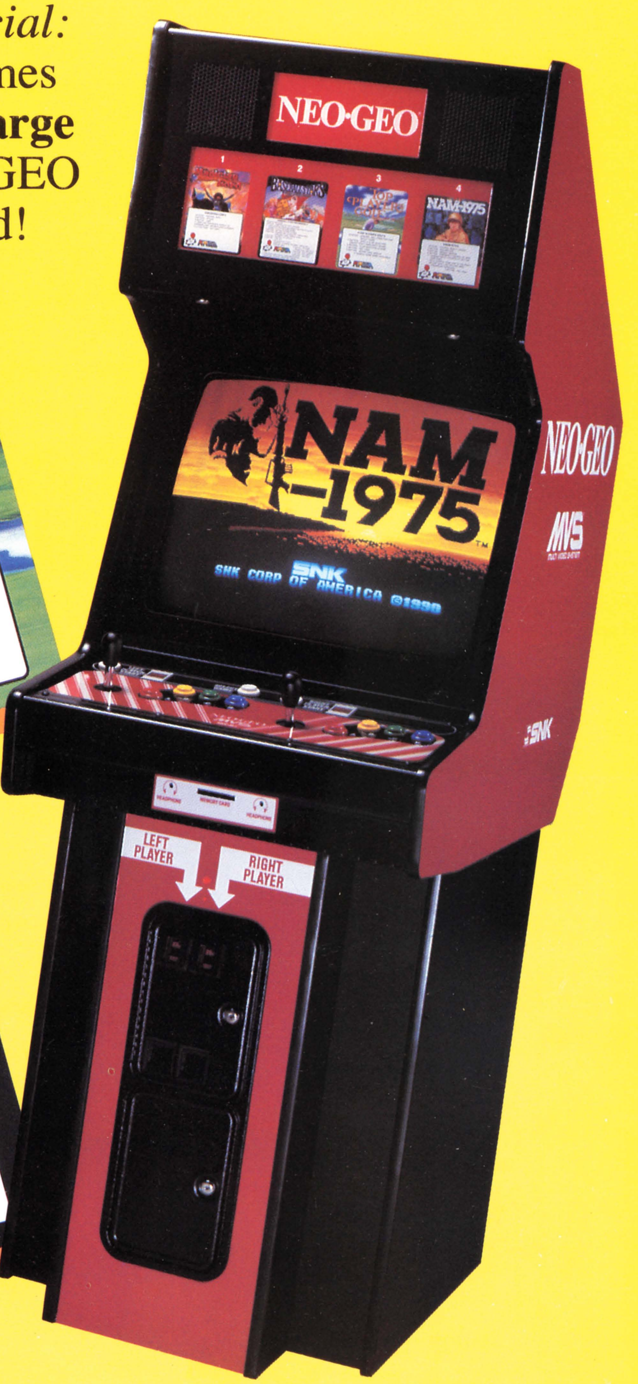
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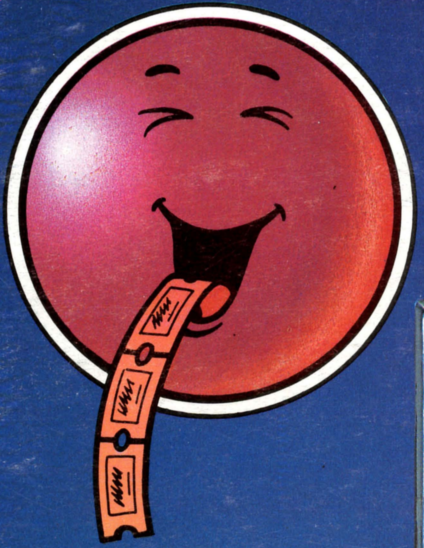

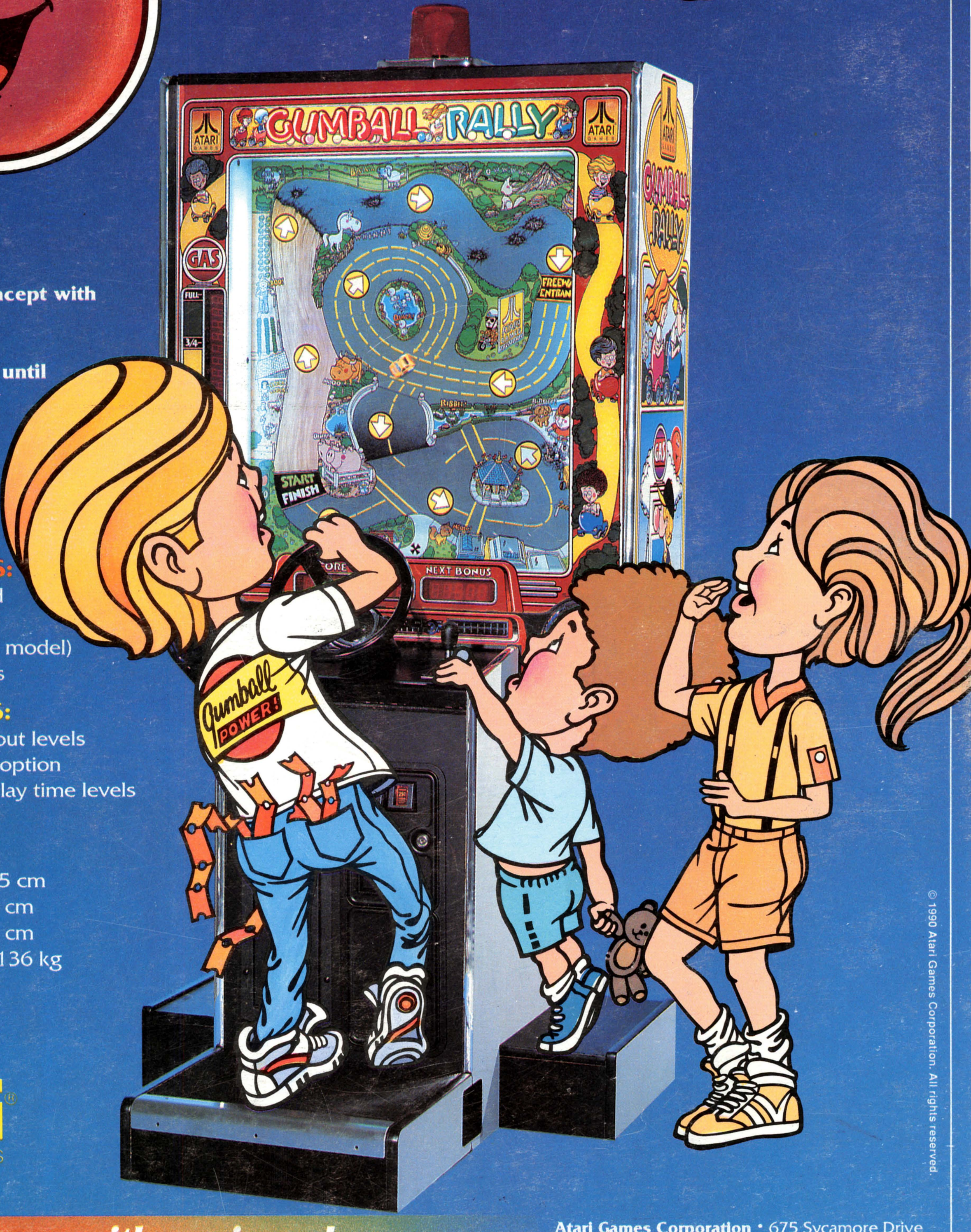
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